

EAST CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES, 450-1450

Waiting for the *End of the World*

European Dimensions, 950-1200



Tsvetelin Stepanov



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Waiting for the *End of the World*

East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450

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By

Tsvetelin Stepanov

Translated by

Daria Manova



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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my mother.



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Preface: How the Idea for This Book Came About

The famous French president Charles de Gaulle spoke of a Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”. I cannot be sure whether he knew that this continent was spatially formed with these topographic parameters in particular from the end of the 10th and the following 11th century onwards, with the massive Christianization of its inhabitants. Moreover, at that time, the three monotheistic religions already had a steady presence there, with the absolute domination of Christianity, of course. The exceptions were at the extreme southeast of the Continent, with the hegemony of Judaism in Khazaria as a ‘state’ religion (from the 9th century and just until the 970s), and in the southwesternmost and northeasternmost parts, with Islam in the Cordoba Caliphate (in present-day Spain) and, respectively, among the Volga Bulgars, whose state bordered the Ural Mountains in the east. The final homogenization of Europe at its northern borders, on a monotheistic level, occurred during the 13th–14th centuries, with the adoption of Christianity by the Cumans and, respectively, Islam by the Tatar-Mongols (in the easternmost regions of Europe).

There has long been no doubt that historians write their texts on past ages with regard to the interests and pursuits of their contemporary audiences. They often see this past from some current perspective (a more general or even personal one). From this point of view, the intentions of an author cannot be without importance. In this connection, for instance, I have asked myself, especially during the period of large-scale enlargement of the European Union in 2004–2007, how could such a macro-space be thought-and-narrated from a macro-perspective, in view of its medieval past? Could this be done through common ‘denominators’, such as the Migration Period, for example, or through wars, trade and economy, pandemics, spread of Christianity and the like? Could it also be seen through a common religious-philosophical and spiritual phenomenon—the Anticipation of the End of the world, with its first peak in Christian Europe in its entirety occurring just after the mid-10th century? After several years of acquainting with various primary sources and secondary literature, I think that the answer to the above question is positive. I also believe that the narrative for this entire Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”, as told through the prism of the Anticipation of the End, could not be realized solely in the style of positivism and event history, since such a narrative would lack coherence (including due to the nature of some of the sources) and it would easily fall apart. In order to view Europe in its entirety through this very phenomenon, I thought it best to show it through two macro-perspectives: 1) an analysis of the notions about ‘the (unclean) peoples Gog and Magog’ and

the directions of their invasions into European (mostly) imperial territories, and 2) the cult of St. Michael the Archangel as a common legacy for the entire Christian Europe with the peak of his worship occurring during the 10th–12th centuries. The first of these macro-perspectives was developed in the present book; the second one should appear in a second volume of this study. Why have I chosen the themes of Gog and Magog and St. Michael the Archangel? Because these two themes are common for at least two of the monotheistic religions. For instance, the cult of St. Michael the Archangel is typical for Judaism and Christianity, while the paradigm of Gog and Magog in its connection to the Anticipation of the End of the world is present in all three monotheistic traditions. In other words, the author of the present book has sought common intersections and areas in apocalypticism and eschatology between Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

The micro-perspective is presented in Chapter 2, but can be best seen in Chapter 3, with the case of the anticipation of the End of times in Christian Bulgaria. Nevertheless, Chapter 3 quite logically also contains aspects of the macro-perspective (in the *topoi* ‘Promised Land’, ‘peoples of Gog and Magog’, ‘Last Tsar/Emperor’, etc., since they are all common for the Christian faith). Thus, the book reveals a constant ‘play’ with the scale of the optics.

The presented text is not *yet another* book about the anticipation of the End of the world in Western (Latin-speaking) Europe around the year 1000, which is what makes it unusual and distinct to a certain degree, if I may say so myself. Although it contains well-known facts and analyses (which is quite understandable in view of the number of decades this phenomenon has been the object of research), it also enables a new type of historical (and conceptual) narrative, as well as new insights into the scope of the above phenomenon.

The presented book is above all an attempt at synthesis, and therefore must be expected to contain the mandatory for this type of work selections (of sources, authors, artefacts, etc.), reductions (including of some contexts), as well as a typifying and/or thematic approach, i.e. a targeted selection of central themes and subject lines. From this particular point of view, the lack of a certain fact constituting only a single one in a string of events of the same nature should not be perplexing. It would not be possible to compress into a single volume, with all possible contexts, a content that encompasses (almost) the entire European continent over two and a half centuries.

The deep conviction of the present book’s author is that this narrative—via the analysis-and-synthesis of the Anticipation of the End of the world phenomenon in a pan-European dimension—can be most adequately presented with the help of *topoi* and semantic cores (common themes), based on universal, including meta-narrative notions such as: ‘chosen people’, ‘Last Emperor’,

'chosen Promised Land', 'unclean peoples Gog and Magog' and the manipulation of the directions of their invasion of the Promised Land, the legacy of Alexander the Great, etc., as well as their specific manifestations in the various parts of the European continent. Such an approach really predetermines the mixing of the above two optics.

It is important to emphasize that a number of the above-selected stable cores and mental constructs are present in all three traditions of the so-called Big Tradition, i.e. the monotheistic religions of the Book, since to a large extent they are the result of meta-narratives (the Bible and the Quran). This is what enables us to see the entirety of Europe, through this prism of Anticipation, while keeping in mind its manifold manifestations in different places. Of course, the basic concepts/cores are best seen in the two branches of Christianity with centers in Rome (the Latin world) and, respectively, Constantinople (the Byzantine-Slavic one). Quite expectedly, the trajectories of the notions in these 'worlds' are realized in the manuscript mainly by viewing and analyzing the so-called imperial peoples of the Early Middle Ages and partly the High Middle Ages (the Byzantines, the Franks, and the peoples of the Holy Roman Empire, in addition to the Danube Bulgarians and the Khazars). At the same time, due attention has also been paid to two other non-imperial peoples that mark both 'ends' of Europe, namely Anglia and Kievan Rus'. Also situated at the end of Europe were the Volga Bulgars, but in their case they are also at the end of the European Islamic world at the time, which makes them an adequate addition to these Series of Brill.

The notions of the End, although based on the so-called Big Tradition, are always 'filtered' by the respective culture, depending on the contexts and the local traditions. This is why, in addition to the 'common places', we can expect to see a range of differences and discrepancies in the various regions of Europe, which is precisely what the author of the manuscript has attempted to research and analyze. Thus, we can simultaneously see a reconstruction of the entirety of Europe through the prism of a phenomenon that is common for its various parts, but also the differences and similarities in the treatment of some of its (*topoic*) cores in the different regions of Europe, determined by specific local events, *caesurae* (the ceasing of a legitimate kingdom's existence, for instance), or are the result of differences in local traditions, in mental and social structures, of the selective uses (including manipulations) of the above cores/*topoi*, made by scholars in the various countries, etc.

And so, the macro-perspective here (the entirety of Europe and the universality of the phenomenon, at least in the Christian world) enables us to portray large historical narratives, while the micro-perspective in the manuscript can be seen with the help of various case studies. It is by analyzing the latter that

the author has attempted to reconstruct some of the specific dimensions, particularities and changes in the perceptions of these large themes in various places, which are manifested in a single common ideological-religious context in Europe within the above two and a half centuries. Since the micro-contexts and the semantic cores are very often intertwined, a certain number of repetitions (of names, texts, etc.) in the text are inevitable.

Chapter 3, which deals with the Bulgarian (Danube) case, is mainly based on a hermeneutic analysis, supplemented by approaches from comparative religious studies, historical anthropology and imagology. The difference with the approach in Chapter 1 is visible with a naked eye and is due to the nature of the Bulgarian sources that are studied and analyzed here and known in science as 'historical apocalypticism'. The above approaches allow for texts of the historical-apocalyptic kind, especially widespread in Bulgaria in the period between the mid-11th century and the second half of the 13th century and the main source for the analysis in Chapter 3, to start 'speaking' to the contemporary audience. Throughout the 20th century, positivist and Marxist-oriented researchers have hastily rejected the above kind of texts, considering them to be more or less lacking any cognitive historical value. If we were to follow their approach, i.e. to expect these highly specific texts to reveal stories à la medieval 'Annals', we would certainly wind up ensnared in methodological dogmatism. With the help of hermeneutics and anthropology, however, today we are able to reveal their hidden messages with regard to the End of times and the associated with it legitimation of tsardom (of the Danube Bulgarians, in particular). Advancing, to certain degree, the hermeneutical approach and that of the history of mentalities implies a particularly focused look at contextualizations, understood as attempts to interpret attitudes and practices that are visible in the assembly of texts, human actions and material traces of the respective historical period. Such an approach is not only acceptable because it is well-backed with primary source material of a serial nature, but is also inherently innovative, because it enables the creation of a comparatively coherent narrative, based on some pre-selected *topoi* and—most importantly—consistent with the nature of the source type.

Acknowledgements

My confession of having been 'afflicted' with apocalypticism and eschatology at the very end of the previous millennium would hardly surprise the readers of this book. The first result of this 'affliction' was the paper "Medieval Eschatological Texts and the Images of the Woman on the Balkans", which I wrote together with Georgi Kazakov and which was presented at the conference "*She on the Balkans*", held in February 2000 in Bansko, Bulgaria. It was subsequently published in 2001, in the book "Limits of Citizenship: European Women between Tradition and Modernity", at the initiative of the editors, Krasimira Daskalova and Raina Gavrilo (Sofia, 2001, 17–29), for which I would like to express my own (and G. Kazakov's) gratitude. Since then, this interest of mine towards the *End of Times* has continued to grow, encompassing more and more topics (St. Michael the Archangel, the *topoi* of Salvation and the Promised Land, the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog', etc.). They all finally came together in this book, which is actually the first part of a two-volume study of various phenomena and processes typical for the people in Europe (and their way of thinking and acting) during the period from the mid-10th century up until the Fourth Crusade. The second volume will provide a detailed study of St. Michael the Archangel's role in this 'salvational plan' preceding the Second Coming of Christ, seen not only from the viewpoint of the people in Western Europe, but also of those living in Byzantium, Danube Bulgaria, Kievan Rus', and in the Jewish community (also seen as an archetypal element in the Old Testament), etc.

During the years of collecting materials on this topic after 1999/2000, I have been fortunate enough to have had the assistance and support of many colleagues and friends, as well as various scholarly institutions, to which I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation.

I would like to begin the lengthy list of names with Veselina Vachkova, Albena Milanova, Georgi Kazakov and Aleksandur Nikolov. Our conversations have always been an intellectual delight and a genuine challenge for the mind. I would like to specially thank Adelina Angusheva-Tikhanova, Margaret Dimitrova, Margarita Karamikhova and Antoaneta Granberg for their continued friendship and for giving me access to some studies that proved to be unobtainable in Bulgarian libraries. I am also grateful to Svetoslav Stefanov, a loyal friend, classmate and colleague for several decades, for his help in reading-and-editing the manuscript.

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‘provocative’ questions on the subject of the *End of Times*. Both by choosing topics for their theses that were similar to this subject matter and by expressing an interest in newly published books on topics close to the issues discussed in this book, they have kept my interest alive, as well as the desire to complete this work.

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I am very grateful for the friendship and support that I have received during the years after 2000 from two British colleagues, namely Jonathan Shepard and Timothy Ashplant. The same can be said in full regarding Florin Curta and Peter Golden from the United States—both with regard to their friendship, and to the various materials that they have sent me and thoughts they have shared concerning some of the topics in this study. In some cases I have relied on articles and books that were sent to me by Anthony Kaldellis and Roman K. Kovalev (both from the US), to whom I also wish to express my thankfulness.

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topics directly related to my study that they have sent me. Among my Russian colleagues, to whom I am also thankful for the shared materials and information on some of the topics in this book, I should also add Tat'iana Kalinina, Sergei Iatsenko, Galina Glazyrina, Elena Mel'nikova, Anatolii Turilov and Igor G. Semenov.

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And last, but not least, my sincere thanks goes out to Vlada Stanković, and especially to Miroslav Jovanović (who is no longer among us, to my great dismay), both from the University of Belgrade. I will always remember how after 1999 Miki Jovanović gladly shared with me information on books and articles related to various topics concerning the *End of Times*, St. Michael the Archangel, etc., which were mainly published in Serbia and the Russian Federation.

If I have somehow failed to thank anyone who has helped me to steadily follow this path of research during the last fifteen years, I do hope that they will forgive me, for it has not been done intentionally.

I am also grateful to all my colleagues who took part in discussing my manuscript, as well as to my reviewers, whose comments and suggestions brought additional value to this book.

For the English edition of my work, I am firstly indebted to Prof. Florin Curta, whom I thank most sincerely for believing in the merits of this book and wishing to add it to Brill's series 'East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages'. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Marcella Mulder, Elisa Perotti and Irini Argirouli from 'Brill' for always finding the best solutions for the various administrative issues concerning this manuscript. And last, but not in importance, my heartfelt gratitude goes out to the translator of this book, Daria Manova, for doing her best to find the most adequate rendition possible in English of the original Bulgarian text.

Tsvetelin Stepanov

September 2014–April 2019

Illustrations

- 1 *Descent into Hell (Resurrection)*, mosaic in the Nea Moni Monastery, Greece, 11th century. From: Vachkova, V., and Shabarkova-Petrova, M., *Misteriiata na bulgarskite stenopisi. Da dokosnesh Boga*. Sofia, 2014, p. 326, no. 9 (photo: V. Vachkova) 353
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Introduction

The ideas about the Holy Land,¹ the *End of Times*² and the Crusades³ are both well known and extensively studied. The same could be said of the relevant texts (chronicles, visions, historical apocalyptic texts, etc.) and the symbols found there ('the four kingdoms', 'the four beasts', 'Gog and Magog', the Last Emperor, to name but a few).⁴ There, such notions appeared during the Christian Middle Ages and were related to such phenomena as 'pilgrimage', 'saints', 'relics', 'Paradise', etc.⁵

Also known is that around the middle of the 10th century, ideas about the Messiah's coming could be found not only among the Christians in Europe (in connection with the anticipated Second Coming of Christ in the year 1000 or 1033), but also among some Jewish *literati* from the Caliphate of Cordoba in Spain, as well as among the elite in Khazaria (Hasdai ben/ibn Shaprut and the circle surrounding the Khazar king'/khagan-bek Joseph, respectively).⁶

Recently, the connection between death and the Apocalypse during the medieval period in Western Europe has also been adequately addressed.⁷ And last but not least, it is also well known that the roots to all these questions related to the *Apocalypse* and *Eschatology* should be sought in the Old and the New Testament, and especially in the books of Isaiah and Daniel, as well

1 Among the numerous studies dedicated to this topic, and especially the works that have been published in the last couple of decades, see, for instance, Magdalino 2003, 233–270; Magdalino 2005, 41–53; Patlagean 1998, 112–126; Danilevskii 1999, 134–150; Wilken 1992; Housley 2000, 234–249, and regarding the 'Second Coming of Christ' and the Year 1000, see, for example, McGinn 1979b; Landes 2000, 97–145; Fried 2003, 17–63; Verhelst 2003, 81–92; Callahan 2003, 181–204; Gouguenheim 1999; Barthélemy 1999; Carozzi 1999; Magdalino 2003, 233–270; Shivarov 2002, 291–304; Mollov 1997.

2 Beliaev 1898 [1996]; Alexander 1985; Collins 1984; Collins 1993; Collins 1998, 85–115—esp. on the prophet Daniel; *Ascension du prophète Isaïe* 1993. J. Flori's book, *L'Islam et la fin des temps. L'interprétation prophétique des invasions musulmanes dans la chrétienté médiévale*. Paris, 2007, unfortunately remained unattainable for me.

3 The literature on this topic is practically innumerable. Amongst the latest works see, for instance, *The Oxford History of the Crusades* 1999; *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium* 2001; Flori 2001; Tyerman 2006; Rubenstein 2011; Koicheva 2004; Gagova 1998; Gagova 2004.

4 For more details, see Alexander 1985, 185–192; Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 45–64, 89–93, 101–106; Tăpkova-Zaimova 2003, 231–239; Tăpkova-Zaimova 2004, 460–474.

5 Amongst the latest studies, see *Treasures of Heaven* 2010; *Saints and their Lives* 2010; *Promoting the Saints* 2011; Delumeau 1992, 1995, 2000.

6 On Khazaria in particular, see Kokovtsov 1932; Rashkovskii 2011, ch. 3.

7 Bynum, Freedman 2000.

as in the Gospel of St. Matthew (Matt. 24, English Standard Version), St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 7–8), and in St. John the Apostle's *Revelation* in particular (Rev. 20).

The Old Testament is especially important, since it relates the story and the fate of the Israelites, the first 'chosen people': their separation from the other tribes and peoples, and from the empires of the Middle East, as well as their claim to a holy, Promised Land.⁸ The Old Testament also contains accounts of the divine approval of some paradigms through which 'God's chosen people' self-organized and acted in the world, to be able to worship and obey this very God: kingship, charismatic leadership, specific laws, prophecy, the holy and blessed city of Jerusalem, sacred space (the Temple in Jerusalem, for instance), sacred objects (the Tables of the Covenant), etc.⁹



During the past 150 years, scholars in Western Europe, the US and the Russian-speaking regions have all produced such a staggering amount of literature on these interrelated problems, that it would be virtually impossible to offer even a halfway complete overview of the various historiographical ideas within just a few pages. Such an endeavor would actually require the creation of a separate monograph, which is by no means the intention of this book's author. Complying with these objective facts, I have instead decided to briefly present the extent to which these diverse topics have been studied, primarily with regard to Western Europe. In this connection, I intend to mainly follow studies of the last couple of decades, containing a synthesized presentation of the most significant tensions in historiography, which emerged as early as the 19th century. For this purpose, I have selected the works of Edward Peters, James T. Palmer and Catherine Cubitt.¹⁰ But before I turn my attention to their views and synthesis attempts, it is imperative to draw attention to St. Augustine and his idea regarding the exact date of the *End of the world*. According to St. Augustine, no-one except God (Acts 1:7; Mark 13:32) knows when the *End of Times* shall occur, i.e. it is pointless to rely on the various calculations, known as *computus*, with regard to the *End*. Hence, Augustine's appeal for these 1000 years, mentioned in the Holy Scripture (Rev. 20: 4–6), to be perceived not literally, but symbolically.

8 The literature on the different aspects of the problem of the 'chosen people' and their *Promised Land* is immense, see, for instance, Ganzel 2010, 197–211; and for a general overview, Hastings 1999, 381–396; Hastings 2003, 25–54; Smith 2003.

9 The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 3.

10 See Peters 2002, 9–28; Palmer 2014; Cubitt 2015, 27–52.

This view, based on the exegesis of St. Augustine, shall remain as the official one of the Western Church during the Middle Ages.¹¹ It should be noted, however, that despite this view and the authority of the official Church, there have always been attempts at such calculations, which, quite naturally and expected for the Middle Ages, have been typical for a rather thin social layer of people, mainly scholars and highly educated men. There were quite a number of such people also in Byzantium, which is evident from the interest in horoscopes manifested in Constantinople during the 10th–11th centuries. Similar attempts at calculating the exact year of the Messiah's coming were also made in the Jewish milieu, as will be seen further on in this book, especially in connection with the efforts in the mid-10th century to pinpoint this moment; the Khazars appear to be also indirectly involved in this. Paul Magdalino has noted, quite appropriately, that among the Jews living in Byzantium, there were also those who were prone to Messianic prophecies, especially in view of the anticipation of the thousandth year from the destruction of the Temple by the Romans (in 70 AD). Against this backdrop, Magdalino draws attention to a specific detail: the monks of the famous Monastery of Stoudios in Constantinople were deeply concerned with the Jewish question in the 1060s.¹²

At the beginning of this millennium, E. Peters proposed that the main theses and hypotheses regarding the anticipation of the *End of the world* in the West around 1000/1033, and mostly in view of the notion of *en masse* terrors preceding the onset of the year 1000, to be divided into three main groups, calling them “strong thesis”, “weak thesis”, and “strong counter-thesis”.¹³ The main representatives of the so-called “strong thesis” highlight the fact that in Western Europe, shortly before the year 1000, a number of accounts and examples of mass fear and apocalyptic tensions could be seen in the local societies. Most often such statements are based on accounts from two main sources from this time period, *Liber apologeticus* by Abbo of Fleury (ca. 945–1004) and *Historiarum Libri Quinque* by Rodulfus/Raoul/Ralph Glaber (ca. 980–1048). One of the most renowned names among the defenders of this thesis that emerged in the 19th century is that of the French historian Jules Michelet. Along with his supporters and followers, he insisted that every Christian in the West was terrified of the approaching year 1000 and was subsequently relieved when this year passed without the expected catastrophe becoming a reality.¹⁴

11 The literature on this subject is immense. See, for instance, Markus 1970; Landes 2000, 97–145; Shivarov 2005a, 19–29.

12 Magdalino 2008, 130.

13 Peters 2002, 9–28, esp. 16–21.

14 Peters 2002, 15–16.

As regards the so-called “weak thesis”, its representatives also accept the above claims, but regard them as valid not only for the year 1000, but rather for a much longer period, including, according to Johannes Fried’s version, the years between the 970s and 1042. In addition, they do not rely solely on textual accounts, but extend their analyses to also encompass sources from the sphere of art. One of the first among them was Henri Focillon, with his book from 1952.¹⁵ After the 1980s, the significant studies in this field include those of Johannes Fried and Richard Landes, as well as those of Daniel Callahan et al.¹⁶ They refine some of the claims of the representatives of the “strong thesis”, but at the same time they particularly viciously attack those who support the thesis about the lack of mass fear in the Western societies around the year 1000, i.e. the defenders of the “strong counter-thesis”. The latter include both authors from the 19th century (F. Plaine, R. Rosières, J. Roy, H. von Eicken, P. Orsi, etc.), as well as from the 20th (F. Lot, E. Pognon, G. Duby, etc.).¹⁷

James T. Palmer published (at the very end of 2014, Cambridge University Press) the book *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*. It contains a very concise but useful overview of the main trends in Western historiography related to the expected *End of Times*.¹⁸ Following E. Peters, Palmer proposes that the debates on this subject be divided into three main groups; while he himself is a supporter of yet another, “a fourth position” in the studies, as he describes it.¹⁹ He takes into account some of the recent views on the subject by Bernard McGinn and Paul Magdalino, which acknowledge the tensions between ‘psychological’ and ‘chronological imminence’ as intrinsic characteristics of the early medieval apocalypticism.²⁰ In the end, James Palmer confines his main thesis on the apocalypticism in the West during the early Middle Ages to several key points: 1) apocalyptic thought “was commonplace and mainstream, and an important factor in the way that people conceptualized, stimulated and directed change”; 2) this thought was neither marginal nor extremist and, 3) it became a powerful factor in the discourse of reform in Western Europe, aiming at finding the best way to direct the people there, in order for them to lead a more meaningful and fulfilling life on Earth.²¹

On her part, C. Cubitt divides the scholars dealing with the issues surrounding the expectations of the *End of the world* in the West into two main

15 Focillon 1952.

16 Peters 2002, 18–21.

17 Peters 2002, 16–18.

18 See Palmer 2014, 4–8.

19 Palmer 2014, 7.

20 Palmer 2014, 7–8.

21 Palmer 2014, 3.

groups, referring to “two historiographical strands”. She calls them figuratively ‘Millennial Maximalists’ and ‘Cautious Sceptics’ respectively.²² According to her, the first group includes those (Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, etc.) who perceive the various texts stemming from the time around the year 1000, together with the present references of ‘en masse’-fears, as evidence “of much more widespread fears and anxieties”, related to the inevitable *End*. This type of scholars interpret the ‘silence’ in the sources regarding the apocalyptic fears around the thousandth year as “a deliberate suppression” by the Church hierarchy of the evidence of popular movements around the year 1000.²³ In fact, by the mid-20th century, Henri Focillon expressed the idea that the latent fears concerning the year 1000 were suppressed precisely by the Church in the West.²⁴ As Tsocho Boiadzhiev points out, however, in this case it would be logical to question why the Church would do such a thing and if it did indeed attempt to do so, with what means and mechanisms was such an intention achieved.²⁵ According to Cubitt, the group of the ‘Cautious Sceptics’ highlights the fact that the anticipation of the Last Judgment was commonplace during the early Middle Ages. They stress the “tenuous nature of links between expressions of apocalypticism and fears concerning the year 1000”.²⁶ In the last couple of decades, this group could be further expanded to include, for instance, Sylvain Gouguenheim²⁷ and Jean Delumeau,²⁸ who support the old thesis that for the West, the fear of the thousandth year was only a myth.²⁹ This group clearly overlaps with the representatives of the ‘strong counter-thesis’, as E. Peters called them.

The author of the present book believes that some of the difficulties in interpreting the above topics in Western Europe could be solved, at least in part, by comparing them with the specifics of the European Christian East, namely those typical of the Byzantines and the Bulgarians in the period around 992 and 1092, when the *End of Times* was expected in this part of the known world. Thus, the situations surrounding the disputes about the fears associated with the anticipation of the *End* in the year 1000 could become much clearer, if they

22 Cubitt 2015, 28–29.

23 Cubitt 2015, 28–29.

24 Focillon 1952, 63.

25 Boiadzhiev 2007, 165.

26 Cubitt 2015, 29.

27 Gouguenheim 1999, esp. 52–63.

28 See Delumeau 1995, 17, for whom the “fears of the year 1000” in the West are merely a legend.

29 More on this idea found in Pietro Orsi (1887), Edmond Pognon (1947), Georges Duby (1980; 1995) and others, see in Peters 2002, 13–14, 17, with the cited literature, and in Palmer 2014, 5–6.

were viewed in a wider European Christian context. At the same time, it is obvious that revealing the spiritual atmosphere of a period of over 200 years from the historical development of a whole continent is a much more complex task than stating a series of facts. This is why this book does not aim to accomplish such an ambitious goal. Its author, however, has decided not to rule out relying on some of the achievements of the approach, known as the history of mentalities, in order to attempt at least a partial glimpse into the minds of the *literati* of that period, as well as some of their specific 'coping techniques' regarding the tensions surrounding the emergence of the so-called signs, often perceived as preceding the *End of Times*.

As will become clear from the pages below, the analysis of the sources, and especially those dealing with the subject of imperial eschatology and the associated with it *End*, cannot hide the fact that the anticipation of this *End* had intensified among certain circles in several parts of Europe, for instance in the Holy Roman Empire, Francia, England, Danube Bulgaria and Byzantium. Therefore, one cannot claim that the texts concerning apocalyptic topics and originating from the second half of the 10th and the following 11th century were mere rhetoric of some learned authors.³⁰ However, it must be made clear that some of the greatest 'initiators' of these escalations were people from the inner circle of various rulers and, above all, learned men (clerics, monks, abbots), who also read different apocryphal texts with an apocalyptic perspective. It has long been established that the apocryphal texts, including the various *Visions*, were a favourite reading matter for many scholars in the Middle Ages, both in the West and in the East. Still, it is highly unlikely that these and similar texts reached the masses of common people; it is also doubtful that the imminence of the *End of the world* was widely preached from the pulpits. At this point, the available sources do not outline such a picture, which would cause us to accept as legitimate the claim of the existence of widespread fear among the various classes of the European societies, beginning from the second half of the 10th century onwards. Quite fittingly, a recent study dealing with the apocalyptic and eschatological thought in England around the year 1000, directly states: "Certainly, the evidence for apocalyptic speculation in England around the year 1000 points to elite deliberation, not popular".³¹ As will be seen in this book, such a conclusion is largely valid also for the European Christian East, and for the Byzantines and the Bulgarians, in particular.

In view of the above-said regarding the Christian East, it would be appropriate to recall the names of some of the major Byzantinists and their statements

³⁰ See MacLean 2007, 86–106.

³¹ Cubitt 2015, 51.

about apocalyptic and eschatological issues.³² Among them, I would firstly like to mention Paul Magdalino and Wolfram Brandes from the last 3–4 decades,³³ as well as a highly significant and fundamental work from 1972 by Gerhard Podskalsky on the Byzantine imperial eschatology, which analyzes a great number of sources associated with eschatology in its relation to the imperial idea.³⁴ To this day, this relation remains the basis for the study of apocalyptic texts especially in countries that have claimed imperial status during the Middle Ages. The same group should also include the research of Paul J. Alexander from the 1970s and 1980s, and especially his book from 1985.³⁵ In his works, he reveals the ‘use’ of various ‘common places’ (*topoi*) in this type of writings in Byzantium, as well as their subsequent ‘existence’ in the Latin West, and also among some Slavic-speaking peoples.

I believe that in view of his research, even if it is on Byzantine ‘terrain’, Magdalino can be included among the supporters of the “weak thesis”, as E. Peters calls it. Here I would just like to call to mind a statement of his in one of his recent works, namely that “‘l’an mil’ may have meant even more in Byzantium than in the West”.³⁶ This conclusion of his is based on a number of his earlier publications, in which Magdalino analyzes the available sources from Byzantium, from the period between the mid-10th century and the first decades of the 11th century. There, he discovers ample traces of tension among certain circles of Byzantine society with regard to the anticipation of the *End of Times* around 992.³⁷ They have been traced and discussed in the respective parts of this book.

According to P. Magdalino, the eschatological attitudes in Byzantium in the period between the 11th and the 13th centuries remain to be investigated.³⁸ In my view, this statement requires at least some clarification: between 1018 and 1186, a large part of Byzantium was in fact comprised of the former First Bulgarian Empire, and, therefore, the historical apocalyptic texts written in Old Church Slavonic and stemming from the Bulgarian lands could be perceived also as a Byzantine cultural heritage, even if they were not written in Greek. Would it not be more logical, then, to view the above texts as an integral part of the apocalyptic and eschatological framework of the multiethnic

32 For a good review of the achievements on these issues in Byzantine studies, see Timotin 2003, 241–252.

33 Brandes 1989, 116–122; Brandes 1990, 304–322; Brandes 2003, 58–71; Brandes 2008, 157–200.

34 Podskalsky 1972.

35 Alexander 1973, 21–27; Alexander 1978; Alexander 1978c, 1–15; Alexander 1985.

36 Magdalino 2008, 129.

37 See Magdalino 1993, 3–34; Magdalino 2003, 233–270; Magdalino 2005, 41–53.

38 Magdalino 2008, 130.

Byzantine state? It is well-known that these texts from the Bulgarian territories of the Byzantine Empire contain a number of references (clichés, *topoi*, etc.) of Byzantine (and more generally Biblical) origins and that in some of them, the unknown Bulgarian scribes present precisely this integrity of the two Christian ‘chosen peoples’, the Byzantines and the Bulgarians, as being ruled by successive Byzantine and Bulgarian *basilei* on the throne (of their common Empire!).³⁹ This is one more argument for including a whole chapter in this book, dedicated to the Bulgarian notions of the *End of the world*. It would not be too exaggerated to say that on the level of eschatological ‘crises’ from the 10th–12th centuries, a certain closeness can be seen between the Byzantines and the Bulgarians (and their respective beliefs), which gives reason to consider similarities of a typological nature in these phenomena, but also for a unity of mental attitudes among the representatives of some local educated (and mostly monastic) circles. Therefore, it would be only logical to make a quick overview of at least some of the most significant achievements in this field, to distinguish some of the main interpretative currents in the research, as well as to note certain issues that remain unclear for Bulgarian historiography. The important monography of Ivan Biliarsky can be used in this respect, as it outlines a number of issues of a substantive and methodological nature. Biliarsky distinguishes several main trends in this type of interpretations in Bulgarian historiography in the last century, which could be grouped as positivist, folkloric-mythological, ‘patriotic’ (essentially positivist), ‘Bogomilistic’, etc.⁴⁰

In Bulgarian historiography, in recent decades, scholars have devoted their attention mostly, if not entirely—perhaps the only exception here being Prof. Nikolai Shivarov—to some of the subject matter concerning the *End of Times* based on historical apocalypticism (after the second half of the 11th century), and mainly, quite expectedly, in a Bulgarian-Byzantine context.⁴¹ This is not surprising, in view of the tradition in Eastern Europe (Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian, etc.) from the end of the 19th century and during the first 6–7 decades of the 20th century to subject this type of writings mainly to a textual critical analysis with prevailing linguistic research and conclusions. In addition, there

39 A number of researchers have drawn attention to this fact. From the last decade, see, for instance, Stepanov S.a. [2002], 122–129; Stepanov 2007b, 108–118; Vachkova 2006, 295–303; Biliarsky 2013.

40 See in greater detail Biliarsky 2011, 30–54; Biliarsky 2013, 29–64.

41 See the works of Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, Anisava Miltenova, Miliiana Kaimakamova, Angel Nikolov, Ivan Biliarsky, etc., all of which have been widely used and discussed in the present book.

are also those striving at all costs to search for and find in this particular ‘genre’ of apocalyptic works concurrences (or additions) to the information concerning actual historical events from the 10th–13th centuries. Unfortunately, such a positivist approach has never led to adequate results. It must be noted that up until the end of the last century, the inertia of the so-called Bogomilistic interpretation of this type of works was also quite high; it was finally overcome in the last 20 years,⁴² thanks, in particular, to the research of Nikolai Shivarov, Miliiana Kaimakamova, Anisava Miltenova, Dmitrii Polyviannyi, Angel Nikolov, Tsvetelin Stepanov, Ivan Biliarsky, etc. In the analysis and reconstruction of the accounts in this type of texts, the majority of these authors accentuate Old and New Testament *topoi* and their use by Bulgarian *literati* from the 11th–13th centuries. These learned men aimed to ‘weave’ the Bulgarian past and present into the canvas of the universal Christian history of Salvation, mostly perceived through the prism of the Byzantine model.

At the same time, the issues surrounding the anticipation of the *End* in the West remain underdeveloped in Bulgarian historiography and occupy—and quite sporadically at that—a limited number of researchers. Among them can be named Tsocho Boiadzhiev and Ivelin Ivanov who have both devoted articles to some aspects of the anticipation of *the End* in Western Europe and especially around the year 1000, in particular.⁴³ Both Boiadzhiev and Ivanov are inclined to agree with the predominant opinion in Western historiography, and especially the French one, that there was no real fear among the population in Western Europe around the year 1000 regarding an imminent *End of the world*.

A certain computational approach can be found in the article of Elena Stateva, titled “*Interpretation of Daniel: the Bulgarian Scenario for the End of the World (10th Century)*” (“*Tolkuvanie Daniilovo: bulgarskiiat stsenarii za ‘kraia na sveta’ (X vek)*”).⁴⁴ This text, however, also does not go beyond the Bulgarian-Byzantine realia. The late Ivan Venedikov, as well as Todor Mollov and Ancho Kaloianov (the latter generally only sporadically) have preferred to analyze the *End of Times* phenomenon in the Bulgarian lands using mythological/folkloristic ‘keys’, with sometimes inadequate results, for obvious reasons (some of which I will discuss in Chapter 3). The authors of this approach are, not surprisingly, harshly criticized by Ivan Biliarsky.⁴⁵

42 For details, see Biliarsky 2013, 39–40, 42.

43 Boiadzhiev 2007, 155–178; Ivanov 2003.

44 Stateva 2014, 97–106.

45 Biliarsky 2013, 43–45.

In terms of theology and linguistic studies in Bulgaria, there has long been a number of studies dedicated mainly to the interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies,⁴⁶ for example those of Daniel,⁴⁷ Isaiah,⁴⁸ or Ezekiel,⁴⁹ as well as the messianic and apocalyptic notions in the Bulgarian Old Testament apocalypticism and apocryphal tradition in general⁵⁰ and the apocalypticism-related image of the ‘Heavenly City’.⁵¹

To the best of my knowledge, the present monographic study is the first of its scope. It includes, in a comparative perspective, not only the Christian world, but also the world of Islam and Judaism, viewed through the prism of the main theme: the anticipation of the *End of Times/the world*. My primary objective, therefore, is to reveal the significantly greater scope of this phenomenon and its “derivatives” during the 10th–12th centuries, and not, as tradition dictates, to content myself with a mere presentation and analysis of the Christian *case*, be it that of the West, of Byzantium, or of the Danube Bulgarians.

Since the study encompasses an immense geographical area and numerous and varied “parties” (Bulgarians, Byzantines, Franks, Anglo-Saxons, Khazars and Jews, the Rus’, etc.), it is inherently clear that the comparative analysis of the databases will be among the guiding principles for the author of this book. With this type of analysis, however, I feel it is also necessary at least to mention some of its ‘pitfalls’ and limitations. For example, every researcher is fully aware of the fact that the various reasons and contexts that have given rise to a certain phenomenon or event in a certain time and place will also lead to different end results. Therefore, along with the search and recording of ‘common denominators’ among certain phenomena and processes that would make them comparable, the contextuality with its concrete specifics should also be presented, in my opinion, even if quite concisely. Which is why contextualizing has been given such a prominent place in the present study.

Apart from the comparative analysis, and especially in view of its ‘deficiencies’, noted above, other important scientific approaches that are also needed are the historical-anthropological approach (esp. from the sphere of the so-called history of mentalities), the comparative religious studies and the hermeneutic methods, as well historical reconstruction. All of these methods together make it possible for such a text to integrate a great number of varied

46 For a general overview, see Markovski 1942–1943, 1–68; Shivarov 2000, 31–50.

47 Markovski 1950–1951, 1–31; Vulchanov 1975.

48 Piperov 1982; Kuncheva 2012.

49 Shivarov 1979; Iovcheva, Taseva, 1998, 26–39; Iovcheva, Taseva 2001, 65–80; Iovcheva, Taseva 2003; archim. Methodius 1984, 4.

50 Popmarinov 2000, 7–18; Vulchanov 1978–1979, 134–183.

51 Arch-priest Subev 2011, 19–26.

traditions stemming from regions that are far apart. The latter provides the opportunity for a kind of *holistic* examination of a (presumably) pan-European phenomenon, together with its various components, while also taking into account the regional traditions and their specifics. It is therefore clear that the author of the present book shares the conviction that such a study could not be carried out solely on the basis of the positivist narrative. That is why I hope that the various perspectives and scales suggested above, along with the different methodologies applied in the individual chapters of this book will make it possible to refine old conclusions, to set new and specific highlights, as well as to ask new questions of the primary sources. Hopefully, the different perspectives will make us 'read' this fragment of the past by privileging other points of view, which could result in a somewhat different narrative (with regard to the traditional ones).

The chronological framework of the study can be easily justified as follows. Its *starting point* (c. 950) is related to the emergence of a number of specific written texts in Western Europe in the mid-10th century, all of them dealing with different aspects of the *End of the world* subject matter. The *end point* (ca. 1200) is somewhat arbitrary, but is nevertheless closely tied to the time immediately preceding the fall of Constantinople—known as 'the eye of the universe', 'the center of the world', 'the New Jerusalem'—in April 1204. That event put an end to a lot of the established notions about the Christian world, as well as to one of its major (if not the main one) 'world centers'. 'Attaching' the end point to the first conquest of Constantinople in 1204 has its logical explanation: in the early Middle Ages, the notion emerged that the *End* of this world will come, both by presumption and by necessity, only when the Byzantine capital falls in the hands of 'the forces of evil', foreshadowing the coming of Antichrist before Judgment Day.

This is the moment to make another clarification: the present book is actually meant to be the first volume of the study; the second volume will be devoted to the European notions regarding the role of St. Michael—the Archangel who is inextricably linked to the subject of the anticipation of the *End*. Which is why the two volumes should be viewed as an inseparable whole. Naturally, where necessary, I have touched upon some aspects concerning St. Michael the Archangel also in this first volume of the study.

I would also like to note here in the *Introduction* that I shall not dedicate a separate chapter to the significant but extensively studied in historiography issue of the relation between the Crusades (after 1095), the liberation of the Promised Land, and the *End of the world* visions, or to the subject matter concerning the conflicts between the Papacy and the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, the latter often viewed as Antichrist before the *End of Times*. These

'tensions' between the Papacy and the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire from the 11th–12th century (especially during the rule of Emperor Henry IV and Frederick I Barbarossa) were also perceived in an apocalyptic 'key' by some of their contemporaries.⁵² There is also no separate chapter for the well-studied, particularly in the West and in Russia, issues concerning Antichrist. A more active interest in the just-named topics would have most probably distracted me from delving into the very different areas of research of the phenomena, processes and facts of the *anticipation of the End*. Of course, in the text below, I have presented, where necessary, the relevant contexts of particular events or phenomena, as well as the specific manifestations of a given process (or processes) related to the above-mentioned three topics. In short, I have tried to seek answers to some of these questions in the relevant places, mostly within the first two chapters of the book.

And so, led by the well-known saying that everything (events, processes, facts, etc.) can be understood only in comparison with something else, on the following pages I have attempted to present and interpret specific phenomena from the period mentioned in the title, and within a wide comparative framework. As I mentioned earlier, this framework encompasses not only the Christian world and its expectations regarding the *End of Times*, but also parts of the Islamic world and the Judaic one. I believe that in this context, some processes and phenomena stemming from the two Bulgarian medieval states (Danube Bulgaria and Volga-Kama Bulgaria) could get clearer dimensions and a more adequate interpretation. Consequently, regarding the Bulgarian Christian *case*, this work will attempt to expand the usual horizon of research, which commonly views the issues surrounding the anticipation of the *End* mainly according to the Byzantine Christian paradigm. In this respect, the present study stands closest to some of the articles authored by Prof. Archiprb. Nikolai Shivarov in the last 11–12 years.⁵³ He is probably the only author in Bulgarian historiography who has outlined the 'Bulgarian' anticipation of the *End of the world/End of Times* against the backdrop of the common pan-European horizon. I would nevertheless like to point out that in his writings, N. Shivarov also does not go beyond the scope of the Christian world.

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It is necessary as well to briefly clarify the matter regarding two of the terms used in this book. They are *apocalypse (apocalypticism)* and *eschatology*.

52 On these issues and texts, see McGinn, 1979b.

53 See Shivarov 2002, 291–304; Shivarov 2004, 564–576; Shivarov 2013, 121–136.

In some places in the text, they have been used interchangeably, something that can also be found in many other studies, especially ones which are not strictly theological. These terms, of course, are not identical in nature, which is evident even on an etymological level. Thus, ‘eschatology’ directly points to the notion of “the last things” (Gr. *ta eschata*), derived from the fact that all men are mortal and that there will be a Judgment Day (the Last Judgment) for everything here on earth in some indefinite future. An important distinction exists between the individual and the universal, or cosmic, eschatology. The individual one is connected to the fate of the individual, i.e. the fate of the soul *post mortem*, whereas the cosmic eschatology implies much larger transformations or even the end of this world.⁵⁴ In turn, *apocalypse* (Gr. *apokalypsis*) means “revelation” in a Christian context, but can also be seen as a kind of subdivision of eschatology. And *apocalypticism* is a unique branch of Jewish literature that emerged in the so-called Second Temple period, i.e. in the years of greatest hardship for the nation of Israel. It is an expression of the Jewish aspirations to re-establish the Messianic Kingdom of David on earth.⁵⁵ During the Christian Middle Ages, historical apocalypticism easily merged with millennialism (millenarian notions) regarding the year 1000, with the emphasis being more on the coming of a utopian age than on supernatural revelation.⁵⁶

Many Christians, however, also use the word ‘apocalypse’ in another meaning: as some sort of catastrophic evil or disaster that will occur on the way to the final end. In some cases, these two concepts overlap since both of them are inherently tied to the belief that the End of this world is inevitable. Moreover, according to both eschatology and apocalypticism, a believer could hope that the *End* would bring with it a solution to all earthly problems and would indeed end the suffering, even carry them to some kind of paradise.⁵⁷



What makes possible the comparison of so many *cases* from the world of Christianity? It is worth noting that from a certain point onwards, some theologians in Western Europe started to directly tie the *End of Times* to the year 1000 (or 1033). The world, influenced by the Byzantine vision for time, eternity and the *End*, however, relies on calculations which are based on the so-called

54 Weblowsky 1987, 149–150; McGinn 1994, 12–13, and esp. p. 13, where McGinn speaks of “apocalyptic eschatology”; see also *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology* 2008.

55 Khristianstvo 1993/1, 97–s.v. Apokaliptika; see also Collins 1987, 334–335.

56 Collins 1987, 335.

57 Collins 1987, 336; Palmer 2014, 10; see also Delumeau 2000, 216–248.

Alexandrian Era or Era of Constantinople, and which are tied to two well-known starting points: 5500 and, respectively, 5508 years from the Creation of the world (*era Mundi*). And so, the Byzantines associated the *End* with the year 992, as well as with 1092, and especially 1492. It is also worth noting that both traditions of computational calculations stem from the same Biblical, i.e. paradigmatic, base—that of *Genesis* (1–2), namely of the six days of God’s ‘work’ creating the visible world and the seventh day, His rest, as well as from a psalm (Ps. 89:5–90:4), which reveals that for God, a thousand years are as one day (“as yesterday when it is past”).

The relation between Christianity, as viewed through the prism of awaiting the *End*, and the world of Islam and Judaism is evident not only in their common ‘root’, the Old Testament, but also in another highly important paradigmatic figure—the first ‘universal’ king, Alexander the Great of Macedonia. The figure of the latter is tightly bound to a series of phenomena in these three worlds, all of them based on themes surrounding the *End* and the attacks of the so-called ‘unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog’ before the *End of Times*. As shall be seen later in the book, mostly in Chapter 2, Alexander the Great and his successors had tried to create, for the first time in the postdiluvian history of humankind, a single area of civilization. It was perceived as a meta-space with trans-cultural and trans-chronological characteristics,⁵⁸ i.e. as a space of civilization *par excellence*. This primary perspective also became one of the significant ‘starting points’ for the comparative analysis of so many different cases, attempted in this book (for more details, see Chapter 2, as well as parts of Chapter 3). Thus, by comparing the same phenomenon through the prism of the three monotheistic religions, we can gain a deeper insight into the expectations for the *End of the world* before 1200. By expanding our perspective (by including the interpretations of both the Volga Bulgars, the Jews, as well as those of Kievan Rus’, an approach that is not popular, at least among the Bulgarian historians) and transcending the much narrower traditional boundaries of these historiographical studies (focused, for the most part, on Western Europe and, albeit only partially, Byzantium), we can also expand the borders of the European civilized world in the period before the end of the early Middle Ages.

To be able to see quite clearly not only the similarities, but also the differences from the other parts of Europe, as viewed through the prism of the expectations regarding the *End of Times* in the time period in question, I have decided, and quite rationally so, to dedicate a separate chapter to all the relevant facts and existing evidence (along with its analysis) that pertain to Danube Bulgaria (see Chapter 3). I feel that in this way, the Bulgarian Christian case can stand

58 For an analysis in this direction, see Shukurov 1999, 33–61.

out even better against the Angles and the Saxons, the Byzantines, the Western Franks and the inhabitants of the Holy Roman Empire, the Rus' and the other Christian people, as well as the Jews (actual Jews and the Khazars), and the Bulgar Muslims of Volga Bulgaria.

• • •

And finally, a 'warning' to the potential readers of this book. Since many of the genres, names of peoples/ethnic groups, religions, etc., as well as a number of motifs, archetypes, *topoi*, etc. that appear in this text are interwoven, given that they are by definition all part of a shared 'network' of concepts (*'chosen people'*, *'chosen kingdom'*, *salvational mission*, *world directions*, *End of Times*, *unclean peoples*, *sacred/holy land*, etc.), the resulting picture is quite large and extensive. At the same time, it is also somewhat difficult to continuously unfold the story in a truly coherent (chronologically and otherwise) manner. As a result of the latter come the inevitable, but only occasional, repetitions in the three chapters of the study.

European Dimensions of the Anticipation of the *End of Times*: Texts. Contexts. Real Places and Symbolic *Topoi*

The eschatological and apocalyptic expectations in early medieval Western Europe with regard to the approaching year 1000 are a well-known fact that has generated a multitude of studies throughout the years. Such sentiments could be found both in the lands of the Germans and among the future Frenchmen and Italians, as well as in present-day England. They were also present in the Byzantine territories, and similar (if not identical) expectations also spread across the Bulgarian lands, where they became especially visible after the fall of the First Bulgarian Empire in 1018.¹

A well-known dispute in historiography is the one regarding the so-called fear (or even terror) of the year 1000 (“The Terrors of the Year 1000”, respectively “La terreur de l’An Mil” in French). Today, it is absolutely clear that there, in fact, was no all-consuming fear of the *End of the world* occurring in the year 1000. Nor could there be such a fear² in the case of the Christian European communities taken in their whole, encompassing both the clergy, the secular nobility and the free commoners, the so-called three *ordines*. Daniel Verhelst

1 For more information on the expectations of the Byzantines and the prophecies in Byzantium, see Alexander 1978, no. xv; Magdalino 2005, 41–53, esp. 45–47; Magdalino 1993, 3–34, esp. 24–26, where the author specifically points out: “Altogether, the evidence for a buildup of eschatological tension in the tenth century is impressive” (p. 25); Magdalino 2003, 233–270; with regard to Western Europe, the literature on this subject is immense; see, for instance, McGinn 1979b; Landes 2000, 97–145; The Peace of God 1992; The Apocalyptic Year 2003; Barthélemy 1999; Bourin, Parisse 1999; Carozzi 1999; on the expectations in the Bulgarian Empire, see Mollov 1997; Shivarov 2002, 291–304; Shivarov 2013, 121–136. Especially significant in this context, namely the search and discovery of ‘signs’ marking the beginning of the *End of Times*, are the clues found in several Byzantine and other sources regarding the attitude towards comets in the period after the 970s. On this matter, see Täpkova-Zaimova 2009, 24–25, 135, 141–142, as well as Mollov 1997, 111–120.

2 The literature on the subject of the ‘terror’ of the year 1000 and other related topics is extensive—see, for instance, Focillon 1952; Pognon 1981, esp. 7–16; Duby 1967; Cardini 1995; Lacey, Danziger 1999; Bonnassie 2001. Among the authors that have studied this matter from the second half of the 19th century onwards, see also Boiadzhiev 2007, 157, n. 4; Milanova 2009, 147, n. 2 and 3; *cf.* however, also a number of studies by Richard Landes who took quite the opposite view—namely, that there existed actual fear in the West regarding the impending year 1000.

notes that the apocalyptic expectations were generally within the 'domain' of the clergy, the monks and of educated people in general, but that they had also managed to spread among ordinary people. This, in his opinion, is a sign that they were relatively well embedded in the collective imagination of the Western European communities by the second half of the 10th and in the following 11th century.³ The latter is illustrated particularly well by the massive rise in pilgrimage to Jerusalem right before 1033, due to the computistical calculation of $1000 + 33$ (1000 plus the lifespan of Jesus Christ).

At the same time, it cannot be denied that a number of works, both in Latin, Greek and in Old Bulgarian/Old Church Slavonic, signified that a keen interest in this subject existed during the 9th and 10th centuries. Therefore, and this must be admitted indisputably, the period indicated the existence of at least the desire to comment on this topic, naturally manifested by the learned men in the societies of that time, namely some monks or aristocrats and even rulers. In the following paragraphs I will try to accentuate on the fact that such an interest was nearly ubiquitous among the various societies (and communities) in Europe, despite their differences in language and faith. It seems to me that this phenomenon needs to be examined more closely, especially since it will clearly show that it was not only in Western Europe—as is traditionally presented in scholarly literature—that, prior to the year 1000, some people were driven to contemplate how to meet the anticipated *End of the world*. Indeed, this occurred also in several other, mainly Eastern Orthodox communities, especially among their elites (i.e. the Byzantines, the Bulgarians and the Rus', with regard to the expectations about 992 and 1092), as well as some learned Jews.

1.1 Expectations for the *End of Times* in the Jewish Milieu, 10th–12th Centuries

Many of these notions are naturally rooted in Old Testament messianic writings, the memory of which was preserved in Christian Europe during the early Middle Ages. Especially active in its preservation were the Western European *literati* who wrote in Latin, although in the past couple of decades Paul Magdalino has managed to credibly prove that similar expectations also existed among the Byzantines from the second half of the 10th century onwards. In Bulgaria, Todor Mollov has attempted to achieve something similar in the

3 Verhelst 2003, 82.

mid-1990s,⁴ although some of his theories have proved to be too far-fetched for some Bulgarian scholars of apocalyptic issues.⁵ According to Mollov, many of the visions that the well-educated Bulgarians of the times had about the *End of the world* and Judgment Day can be found either in coded or in plain form as early as the 980s, in connection to expectations for an *End* 'tied' to the year 992.

At the very end of the last century and the beginning of this millennium, Nikolai Shivarov also examined the subject of the eschatological expectations and those regarding the *End of the world*, both in a medieval European context and a Bulgarian one, by studying some of the most emblematic texts on this subject.⁶ I would also like to mention the fact that nearly 20 years ago, Nikolai Shivarov also published a study dedicated to the emergence and development of Old Testament eschatology.⁷ And since the latter takes on the role of an archetype, it is directly related to the matter of the origins of Jewish eschatology. This particular part of the study, however, will deal not so much with the genealogy of these eschatological notions, but rather with the increased interest shown by some of the erudite members of the Jewish community in the Mediterranean region in the coming of the Messiah and the problem of the Jewish Kingdom during the 10th–12th centuries. For instance, Hasdai ben Shaprut (his full name according to both Jewish and Arabic sources being Hasdai ben Yitzhak ibn Shaprut—*Author's note*), the Jewish *majordomo* of the Umayyad Caliph of Cordoba, Abd-ar-Rahman III (912–961), associates such anticipations with the Khazar Khaganate, as will become apparent from the following paragraphs (see also Chapter 2).

This literary tradition actually completes the picture about the recollection and the perception of the *End of the world* and the Second Coming and, in particular, of the anticipation of the Messiah among the Jewish Diaspora in the lands of present-day Spain, a large part of which were under the rule of the Caliph of Cordoba in the mid-10th century. Moreover, it appears that such expectations were widespread not only among the Rabbanite Jews, but also among the Karaite ones, far in the east. Were they the result of the influence exerted by the surrounding Christian world and especially by some of its representatives, more knowledgeable in theology and eschatology and anxiously awaiting what the coming year 1000 would bring? Or could they be a product of the Jewish development itself, along with the observation and

4 Mollov 1997.

5 See esp. the critique of Biliarsky 2011, and Biliarsky 2013.

6 Shivarov 2002, 291–304; Shivarov 2013, 121–136.

7 Shivarov 1996 [1999], 67–159.

deciphering of the appropriate 'signs' (prophecies, celestial events, etc.)? Such questions require a deliberate research that shall remain beyond the scope of this study. One thing can be said for sure—that such correlations can be seen later in Western Europe, towards the period of the High Middle Ages. Then, most probably due to the latest (second) Crusade, and especially in view of the upcoming year 1240, with regard to the Messianic expectations in the Jewish milieu due to the calculations according to the Judaic calendar, the Jewish communities in present-day France and Germany began to express a growing interest in that which was expected to occur in the Promised Land. The latter is, of course, directly connected to the fate of the Ten Tribes of Israel, well known from the Old Testament's *Second Book of Kings*.⁸

Starting from the 9th century and up until the 12th, some Hebrew sources, as well as other Jewish ones, reflected the collective memory of the Jewish population about the future return of the Ten Tribes, based not only on the *Second Book of Kings*, but also on the apocryphal *Book of Esdras*. In its initial version, this story of the Ten Tribes was intertwined with the legend of the lost Jewish kingdom somewhere beyond the Sabbath (Sabbation/Sambatyon) River, which could not be crossed and which in addition ceased to flow only on the Sabbath—the day when, according to the Jewish religious teachings, Jews are not allowed to travel large distances. It was also believed that, with the coming of the Messiah, God Yahweh would stop the flow of the river, allowing the Jews to overcome the barrier and avenge those who had oppressed their brethren. Ever since the 9th century, would-be emissaries of the Ten Tribes constantly appeared in Western Europe.⁹ According to Boris Rashkovskii, the notion (about the Ten Tribes) took on its final shape among the Jews towards the end of the 9th century. This can be seen quite clearly in the *Book of Eldad HaDani*, although the beginnings of the idea about the preservation of the tribes as a separate community had emerged as early as the 2nd century AD, as one of the eschatological concepts in Jewish-Hellenistic literature.¹⁰ From there, the idea also entered various Rabbanite texts.¹¹

During the period between the 7th and the 12th century, a number of Jewish apocalyptic texts emerged, as a result of the conflicts, firstly between Byzantium and Sassanid Persia, and later—between Byzantium and the Arab Caliphate. As Abraham Grossman rightfully notes, in many ways “this period

8 For more details, see Gow 1995; Gow 1999, 41–61; Iuval' 1999, 216–236, esp. 220.

9 Gow 1999, 50.

10 *IV Esdras* 13:39–47; *Baruch* 77–83.

11 Rashkovskii 2011.

can be considered [the] Golden Age” of such literature.¹² As can be expected, in a number of the texts Jerusalem is placed at the center of the Jewish interests. Of special importance, with regard to the specific task at hand, is the fact that during this same period, the genre reached four distinct peaks, one of which occurred during the decline of the Abbassid dynasty, i.e. precisely in the middle of the 10th century.¹³

Daniel al-Kumisi, who will be also discussed further on (see below, Chapter 2), was the representative of the Karaite ‘wing’ in Jerusalem during the 10th century, who appealed to the Jewish Diaspora to send Jews from different lands to come and settle down in Jerusalem: “... And you, our brethren in Israel ... arise and come to Jerusalem ... But if you will not come because you are totally engrossed in your business and occupation, then send (at least) five men from each city together with their sustenance, so that we may form one fellowship to supplicate our God continuously upon the hills of Jerusalem.”¹⁴ This appeal, for the dispatch of five men from each city, is quite reminiscent of the call in the anonymous work, *Midrash of the King Messiah, Gog and Magog*, that appeared in the Jewish Rabbanite circles in France in the 13th century. It highlighted the necessity of bringing to Israel “one from a city and two from a family”,¹⁵ in order to fulfill the expectations of the Messiah’s coming. Actually, the latter is a quote from the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 3:14): “Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” The Zion *topos* is undoubtedly a reference to the Promised Land, i.e. to the place that has Jerusalem as its imaginary and actual center.

The above cited passage by al-Kumisi, however, does not mention the Khazars or their involvement with the messianic expectations. Basing his view on Zvi Ankori,¹⁶ Boris Rashkovskii highlights the fairly positive attitude shown towards Khazaria in some Karaite sources from the 10th century. There, the existence of the Khazar Khaganate, where the official ‘state’ religion was Judaism, was perceived as one of the signs for the future eschatological salvation of the Jews.¹⁷ This specific vision will be discussed several times also later on in this study.

12 Grossman 1996, 295–310, esp. 295.

13 Grossman 1996, 296.

14 Cited from Wieder 1962. The appeal of Daniel al-Kumisi was originally published in Mann 1922, 257–298, see esp. 285; also see, Wieder 1962, 99–138; Iuval’ 1999, 220 and n. 20.

15 Iuval’ 1999, 220.

16 Ankori 1959, 76–78.

17 Rashkovskii 2010, 78, n. 3.

The aforementioned notion has its prehistory which is directly related to both the legacy of the Karaite variety of Judaism and to the Rabbanite tradition, regarded as the Orthodox one. Authors from both traditions have left numerous exegeses of the Old Testament, some of which contain important details concerning the issue of the Khazar elite's religious conversion, the prophecies of Ezekiel about the return of the Jews to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, and a number of other events significant for the 'chosen people', as well as the position of the Khazars among the Jewish Proselytes and so on. These accounts show the extent to which the Khazars were 'linked' to the 'chosen people' and the expected Messiah, as well as the doubts of many Rabbanite and Karaite scholars regarding the *chosenness* of the Khazars. An analysis of some of these specific texts and interpretations will clearly outline the context in which some erudite Jews developed expectations about the *End of the world* that were related to the Khazar Khaganate.

The first Karaite scholar and interpreter of the Old Testament to remark upon the Khazar 'conversion' to Judaism is Jacob al-Kirkisani who lived in the first half of the 10th century. He mentioned these events in his commentary of the narrative portions of the Pentateuch, entitled *The Book of Gardens and Parks*, in connection to a fragment from a blessing given by Noah to his son (Gen. 9:27).¹⁸ The fragment reads as follows: "May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." Al-Kirkisani remarks that, according to some previous interpreters, the meaning of the verse is that God would favor Japheth and help him by having one of the peoples that would come from his descendants enter the Jewish faith. That would namely be the meaning of the phrase, "let him dwell in the tents of Shem".

Some of these same exegetes, continues al-Kirkisani, also claimed that 'the descendants of Japheth' was an allusion to the Khazars who had converted to Judaism. Others, still, were of the opinion that the verse referred to the Persians that had accepted Judaism in the time of Mordecai, Esther and Ahasuerus, as was written: "And in every province and in every city, wherever the king's command and his edict reached, there was gladness and joy among the Jews, a feast and a holiday. And *many* from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews, for fear of the Jews had fallen on them" (Esther 8:17).¹⁹

It was not only in the 10th century that such notions entitling the Khazars with a special mission existed among the Karaite exegetes. Even in the late 11th–early 12th century, similar views can be found in the writings of the Constantinople Karaite Jacob ben Reuben, in particular in his *Book of Riches*

18 For further details, see Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 205–207.

19 See the text in Ankori 1959, 67–68; and also in Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 205–206.

(or *Sefer ha-'Osher* in Hebrew), a kind of 'synopsis' of the works of previous Karaite Bible interpreters. As Boris Rashkovskii points out, information on the Khazars and their state can be found in various contexts throughout *Book of Riches*. Jacob ben Reuben finds special significance in the issue of Khazaria's religious conversion, highlighting the part of the *Book of Ezekiel* (Ez. 47:21–22), which deals with the division of land in Israel in those eschatological times.²⁰ The fragment from *Ezekiel* 47:21–22 reads as follows: "So you shall divide this land among you according to the tribes of Israel. You shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the aliens who stay in your midst, who bring forth sons in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel; they shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel." Commenting on this passage, Jacob ben Reuben directly states that, according to one interpretation of the verse in the *Book of Zechariah* (Zech. 9:6, "A mixed people shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines"), the phrase "*mamzer* ... in Ashdod" is an allusion to the Khazars who converted to the Jewish faith during the years of Exile. And although they are all from one country, Jacob ben Reuben continues, *they did not carry the yoke of Exile. For, indeed, they are mighty; theirs is kingship and rule; and they pay no tribute to Gentile nations* (the italics are mine—*Author's note*).²¹ It is clear that Jacob ben Reuben has an ambivalent attitude towards the Khazars: he considers them Judaized with regard to their religion, but also labels them as self-governing. In this respect, the passage resembles the contents of the so-called Jewish-Khazar Correspondence from the mid-10th century,²² which was mentioned earlier.

Of course, the account of the Constantinople Karaite Jacob ben Reuben was not adequate to the reality of his times, since by the 11th–12th century, Khazaria had long since vanished from the political map north of the Caucasus. But as was said before, he had merely 'summarized' passages from earlier works, probably dating to the first half of the 10th century, when Khazaria was still 'in good health'.

The ambivalence in his attitude will, however, become quite clear once the meaning of the abovementioned word *mamzer* is clarified. This term is very rarely used in the Jewish Bible and, apart from this passage, can be found only once more, in the *Fifth Book of Moses*, i.e. *Deuteronomy* 23:3, where it denotes

20 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 206–208.

21 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 207—from a Russian translation done by Boris Rashkovskii from the book of Jacob ben Reuben included in the MS C 11, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, f. 124 a.

22 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 208.

a bastard child. This way, Jacob essentially uses a pejorative term to refer to the Khazar conversion to Judaism, which occurred 'in Exile', i.e. beyond the borders of the Promised Land of Israel. It remains, however, unclear as to why the Constantinople Karaite, in his commentary on Ez. 47:22, would make the connection between the pejorative *mamzer* regarding the Khazars and their prosperity; especially in view of the stable state of the latter, and also given that the various other Jewish communities continued to be under foreign rule at that time, i.e. carried "the yoke of Exile".²³

These and other reflections of Jacob ben Reuben may become clearer if compared with the information on the Khazars, given by an earlier Karaite interpreter of the Bible, Yefeth ben Ali al-Basri, who lived in the mid- and late 10th century. As can be surmised from his nisba, al-Basri, he originated from Lower Iraq (Basra), although it is known that he spent most of his life in Jerusalem. It was there that he left for posterity a truly definitive work, his exegesis on the entire Jewish Bible, with the exception of a commentary on the *Book of Lamentations*. It is believed that this text by Yefeth ben Ali al-Basri contains at least two mentions of the Khazars. The first one, perhaps not coincidentally, can be found in a comment dealing with a fragment from the *Book of Ezekiel*, the already mentioned passage from *Ezekiel* 47:22–23. Yefeth al-Basri reflects on the well-known matters concerning the righteous proselytes, the division of the lands of Israel between the 'native-born', i.e. the local, Israelites and the ones who settled among them and bore children, and so forth. And just as Jacob ben Reuben wrote of *mamzer*, Yefeth al-Basri says the following: "It is said in (the Book of) Zechariah, peace be unto them: 'and mamzer shall dwell in Ashdod' (Zech. 9:6)." The latter refers also to "the Khazars who entered Jewish faith in Exile. [...] They (also) do not bear the yoke of Exile, like the others, and for them are special places reserved."²⁴ These comments on the prophet Ezekiel are most likely referring to his prophecies about the rebirth of Jerusalem and the erection of the Second Temple after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity,²⁵ i.e. they are directly related to the concept of the 'chosen people' and its holy land. The inclusion of the Khazars in this context, in spite of the ambiguous attitude shown towards them (since they weren't true proselytes, i.e. prior to the Exile), still puts them on the same plane as the subject matter surrounding the anticipation of the Messiah in the middle and the second half of the 10th century.

23 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 208.

24 See the text in its entirety in Russian in Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 209–211.

25 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 211, n. 36.

According to Rashkovskii, the Khazars could be seen through the prism of the messianic expectations among the Jews in a specific way. The Khazar elite converted to Judaism only in the 8th–9th centuries, i.e. after the exile from Israel.²⁶ As a result, they could not be ascribed either to the proselytes who strived to be included among the ‘original’ Jewish tribes in the Promised Land, or to those from eschatological times. This borderline state of theirs brought forth the aforementioned term *mamzer*. In addition, Yefeth al-Basri, unlike Jacob ben Reuben, doesn’t even mention the existence of kingship, i.e. independent rule, among the Khazars. This would make it quite likely that some Karaites from the 10th century would adhere to the traditional notion, according to which the Khazars should not be viewed as true Jews. Only those could be called true Jews, who had accepted the Jewish faith before the Jews were exiled from Israel by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Consequently, only such people could claim religious equality with the rest of the Jews, in accordance with the aforementioned prophecy of Ezekiel (Ez. 47:22–23).

The Rabbanite form of Judaism also does not immediately recognize the right of the Khazars to consider themselves or to be considered by others as true proselytes of the Jewish faith. This can be clearly seen from the terms used by the representatives of this Judaic interpretative tradition, who for a long time did not describe the Khazars as ‘righteous proselytes’ (Hebr. *gerey ha-tzeddeq*), nor use the verb *nitgayyer*, lit. “to become a proselyte” in their writings about them.²⁷ It is telling that such a significant work as the *Book of the Kuzari* (also known as *Book of the Khazar* or in full, *The Book of Refutation and Proof in Support of the Abased Religion*), written by Yehuda ha-Levi, does not once describe the Khazar ruler who had accepted Judaism as a ‘proselyte’. At the same time, Yehuda ha-Levi does not deny that the elite in Khazaria did convert to the Jewish faith; moreover, in the Judeo-Arabic original of the work he goes even further, adding that it was not only the ruler and his deputy, but also the people of Khazaria who subsequently “entered the Jewish faith”. The latter does not reflect reality, since neither the written records, nor the evidence from archaeological sites²⁸ support that. As is well known, Judaism spread only among the ruling elite of Khazaria, although there was also a sparse number of merchants who, too, were Jews (the so-called Radhanites). Also, during the anti-Jewish persecutions in Byzantium, in particular under

26 The literature on the dating of this religious conversion, as well as its scope, is significant in size; among the newer studies see, for instance, Anatolii Novosel'tsev, Vladimir Petrukhin, Valerii Flerov, Alexander Tortika, Roman K. Kovalev, Peter B. Golden, Tsvetelin Stepanov, Boris Zhivkov, etc.

27 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 216.

28 See Flerov, Flerova 2005, 185–206.

the rule of Basileus Romanos I Lakapenos (920–944), and especially during the 930s, some Byzantine Jews fled to the Khazar lands.

It is significant that, just like the Karaites Yefeth al-Basri and al-Kirkisani, ha-Levi describes this “entering into the new faith” with the Arabic verb *dahala*, and in the Hebrew translation of his book, completed two decades later, the Arabic verb is substituted with its Hebrew equivalent, *nihnas*.²⁹ During the period in question, i.e. from the mid-10th to the late 12th century, the first instance of a definitive use of the verb *nitgayyer* regarding the Khazars occurred as late as 1160–1161, in the *Book of Tradition*. Written in a style that was fiercely polemical against the Karaites, this book was the work of Avraham ibn Daud. According to him, the Rabbanite communities of his time had spread along the Itil (Volga) River, “where the Khazars who embraced Judaism live”.³⁰ Also worth noting is the following significant fact: even the aforementioned Jewish-Khazar Correspondence between the Khazar khagan-bek Joseph and Hasdai ben Shaprut does not contain the verb *nitgayyer*, and the Khazars themselves are not included in the number of ‘righteous proselytes’. This is evident from the letter of Hasdai ben Shaprut to Joseph, where a distinction is made between Joseph’s Khazar subjects and the Judaic proselytes. Hasdai assumes that the latter live in the lands neighboring Khazaria.³¹ This notion about the Khazars can be seen even more clearly in Joseph’s reply to Hasdai ben Shaprut. In his letter, the Khazar ruler describes the conversion to Judaism in Khazaria, but does not once use the verb *nitgayyer*, preferring expressions like “[our Khazar forefathers] adopted the religion of Israel”, i.e. uses the verb *nihnas* instead.³²

Joseph emphasizes his prestigious biblical genealogy: he writes that the Khazars have descended from Togarmah, the grandson of Yapheth. He does not, however, place himself among the descendants of Shem, i.e. the original Jews. In the Middle Ages, Togarmah was associated with the peoples of the North and here the allusions to *Ezekiel* 38:6 (“Beth-togarmah from the uttermost parts of the north”) are quite clear, and very indicative. These prophetic words have been used in various genealogical descriptions—both Jewish, Islamic and also Christian—and Yapheth and Togarmah, in particular, have mainly been associated with “the people of the North” who spoke Turkic dialects.³³ Khazaria adopted many traits from the Turkic khaganates, and a number of scholars

29 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 216.

30 The Book of Tradition 1967, 67–68; Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 217.

31 Kokovtsov 1932, 17–18, 68–70.

32 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 217–218.

33 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 218.

(Lev Gumilev and Anatolii Novosel'tsev, among others) even share the opinion that in the mid-7th century, one of the last descendants of the charismatic Turkic ruling dynasty Ashina became ruler of the Khazars and proved to be instrumental in their subsequent political rise. As has already been said, this specific Khazar identity, which came into view somewhere after the end of the 8th century and definitely after the mid-9th century and which was in part Judaic, and in part steppe and gravitating towards the legacy of the Turkic khaganates, proved to be troubling, especially for the Karaite interpreters. Their opinion of Khazaria, if not wholly negative, was, nevertheless, decidedly ambiguous with regard to the possibility that the Messiah would emerge namely from Khazaria at the *End of Times*. After all, this land was situated quite far from Jerusalem, and on top of that it had ceased to exist as an independent 'kingdom' after 965. This, of course, does not mean that during the 10th century, the erudite Khazars lacked information on the various types of calculations regarding the expected arrival of the Messiah. These were conducted in Jewish schools mainly in the Middle East and especially in the lands of present-day Iraq, the northern borders of which were situated relatively near to the southern parts of the Khazar Khaganate.

Let us now delve in greater detail into the so-called Khazar Correspondence between Hasdai ben Shaprut and the khagan-bek Joseph. In the mid-10th century, the distinguished Jew Hasdai ben Shaprut quite deliberately wrote a special letter to the khagan-bek; which has been preserved in two versions, a *Short* and *Long* one.³⁴ Its dating oscillates between the late 950s and before 965. Already in the second half of the 19th century, Avraham Kharkavi (or Garkavi, according to the traditional Russian transcription of his surname—*Author's note*) notes the fact that the Khazars in Hasdai's letter to the khagan-bek are identified as the Ten Tribes of Israel. The part of the letter in question reads as follows:

You have also asked me about "the end of these wonders" (*see Dan. 12:6*—*Author's note*). Our eyes are turned toward to the Lord our God and to the wise men of Israel in the academy of Jerusalem and the academy of Babylon. Though we are very far from Zion, we have heard that because of our many sins, the calculations (*sic!*) have gone astray and we know nothing.

34 See the text in Kokovtsov 1932.

[...] We have nothing now but the prophecy of Daniel (*sic!*). May the God of Israel hasten the redemption (*sic!*) and gather our exiled and scattered [people], in our lifetime and in yours, and in the lifetime of the house of Israel, who love his Name!³⁵

It is evident, therefore, that Hasdai ben Shaprut inquires of Khagan-Bek Joseph about the *End of the world* with the help of the phrase from the Holy Scripture (and the prophesy of Daniel in particular), directly after which come the well-known words of Daniel, marking the beginning of the eschatological time: "And I heard ..., that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished" (Dan. 12:7). According to Boris Rashkovskii, the Jew Hasdai ben Shaprut deliberately treated the Khazars as one of the Ten Tribes (of Israel), all the while being fully aware that they weren't ethnic Jews and stemmed from the Great Steppe, which made them more likely to be related to the Turkic world and that of the First Turkic (Western) Khaganate in particular. Such notions were part of a "large diplomatic project", the aim of which was to establish an official correspondence with the only state in the world at that time with a ruler and ruling elite who professed Judaism.³⁶

The Khazar relation to Judaism and the expected Messiah is a far less discussed topic in the Rabbanite tradition of Judaism and in the writings of its representatives on the Old Testament, when compared to the Karaite written sources from the 10th–12th centuries. For the moment, only one such author is known, albeit quite an early one: Saadia Gaon or Said al-Fayyumi († 942). As his nisba shows, he came from Faiyum in Upper Egypt. Saadia was so knowledgeable in all sciences that he very quickly earned himself a high reputation among the learned men in the rabbinic circles of Babylonia. In fact, despite his 'foreign' roots, in 928 he was appointed as head of the Talmudical Academy of Sura and received the title of *Gaon*. The latter was actually a shortened version of the Hebrew title "Head of the Academy of the Pride of Jacob".³⁷

Saadia Gaon mentions the Khazars twice in his exegesis on the *Book of Exodus*, also repeating the well-known notion of their originating from the biblical Togarmah, son of Japheth, son of Noah (Gen. 10:1–3), which can also be found in the correspondence between Hasdai ben Shaprut and the

35 Translated from the Russian version, which can be found at <http://www.gumilevica.kulichki.net/Rest/resto503.htm>, and in Kokovtsov 1932, 25, 88–89.

36 Rashkovskii 2011.

37 Rashkovskii 2010, 79 and n. 4.

khagan-bek Joseph, i.e. the steppe world.³⁸ Such a perspective on the genealogy of the Khazars is also present in the Islamic written tradition, as well as in a curious work of Jewish origins dating from the same 10th century, the chronicle *Josippon*.³⁹

Dan Shapira sees a connection between the two sources (the correspondence between Hasdai ben Shaprut and the khagan-bek Joseph, and Saadia Gaon) and, more specifically, between the ideas expressed in them about the expected approach of the *End of Times* by the mid-10th century.⁴⁰ As to Hasdai ben Shaprut's connections with the scholarly elite of Babylonia and (possibly?) with Saadia Gaon himself, there should be no doubt: that is also the most likely source of his information about the Khazar elite's conversion to Judaism.⁴¹

I would like to add one more significant nuance to the picture of the Early Middle Ages and especially the scholars who represented the monotheistic religions at that time. The sources contain a huge amount of information which clearly shows that Jewish and Muslim scholars travelled frequently and quite freely between the various large centers of the Mediterranean region—from those in Al-Andalus in the west all the way to Iraq, Iran and Hejaz in the east.⁴² This can also explain why it was relatively easy to obtain information of various kinds, including about Khazaria's conversion to Judaism. At the same time, it remains unclear why Saadia Gaon never directly mentioned that the Khazar elite professed Judaism. Perhaps by the first half of the 10th century, this fact was so well known among the Jews in the lands of present-day Iraq, that a specific mention of it was deemed unnecessary.⁴³

And yet, could one of the two passages that Saadia dedicated to the *Book of Exodus* at least contain hidden hints about the worship of Judaism in Khazaria? In Boris Rashkovskii's opinion, Gaon's commentary on *Exodus* 31:2–3 should be understood in precisely this sense, since the allusions with Hiram, the pagan ruler of the city of Tyre, along with the Judaized Khazars' imitation of the ancient Jewish Tabernacle, described in Joseph's reply to Hasdai ben Shaprut,⁴⁴ are all quite telling. Hiram participated in the erection of the Jewish Temple, and this context is too specific not to be mentioned here. In addition, the Karaite exegeses of the Old Testament from the 10th–12th centuries placed

38 Kokovtsov 1932, 20, 27, 72, 74, 89, 91–92; Rashkovskii 2010, 79, 84.

39 For more details on this book, see Petrukhin 1995, 25–40.

40 Shapira 2005, 503–521, esp. 508; on Saadia Gaon and some of his views and visions on the Heavenly Jerusalem and the Temple, see, in particular, Grossman 1996, 305–307.

41 Rashkovskii 2010, 84–85.

42 Among the numerous works on the topic see, for instance, Goitein 1961, 42, 59; Mishin 2000, 163–165, etc.; Rashkovskii 2010, 85–87.

43 Rashkovskii 2010, 82–83.

44 See Kokovtsov 1932, 2, 29, 77, 94.

the Khazars in the historic context, known from Isaiah (48:14), and, more specifically, in connection to the Persian shahinshah Cyrus (558–530 BC) from the Achaemenid dynasty. Like Hiram, he was also a pagan ruler who was known in the Jewish tradition as the foreign lord who not only liberated the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, but also contributed to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.⁴⁵ Thus, these perhaps deliberately sought 'hidden connections' and allusions begin to seem clearer.⁴⁶

Of no lesser importance for the matter at hand is the direct mention of the 'kingdom of the Jews' in the correspondence between Hasdai ben Shaprut and the khagan-bek Joseph, even though it was not located on the territory of the Holy (Promised) Land, but north of the Caucasus and west of the Caspian Sea: "There is a kingdom of Jews which is called al-Khazar".⁴⁷ Perhaps the proximity of Khazaria to the Caucasus in purely geographical terms has reinforced such expectations and ideas, since this mountain has been associated from olden times with the well-known concept of the 'unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog', closed-off by a wall (to the north of the Caucasian mountain range) that was deliberately built by Alexander the Great himself (for further details, see below, Chapter 2). These peoples are also present in the Holy Scripture, where they are traditionally viewed through the prism of eschatology and apocalypticism—a notion that was widely spread in the literature of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages, as well as in the Muslim medieval world. They will be further discussed in the next chapters of this book.

It is hard to determine at present whether Hasdai ben Shaprut was aware that Jews had been living from ancient times along the southern border of Khazaria with the Arab world, north of the eastern slopes of the Caucasus Mountains and near Derbent (i.e. in present-day Republic of Azerbaijan and Iranian Azerbaijan—*Author's note*). According to the Armenian historians Pavstos Buzand and Movses Khorenatsi, the Armenian king Tigranes II (96–55 BC) populated various regions of his vast state with thousands of Jews from Palestine; in particular, the alpine valleys of the Eastern Caucasus.⁴⁸ A number of contemporary historians postulate today that the so-called Gorsky (i.e. Mountain) Jews of the Eastern Caucasus are namely the descendants of the Jews from the Eastern Mediterranean that were once relocated to this region. They could be seen as the imaginary link between the actual lands of Ancient Israel and those of the early medieval Judaic Khazaria.

45 Ankori 1959, 77–78.

46 Rashkovskii 2010, 79–83.

47 Kokovtsov 1932, 14, 63.

48 Istoriia Armenii Favstosa Buzanda 1953, 134; Alikberov 2010, 50.

1.2 Expectations for the *End of Times* in Western Europe

1.2.1 *Calming of Fears in the 10th–11th Centuries: Adso of Montier-en-Der, Thietland, Raoul Glaber*

Back in 1967, Georges Duby expressed a theory that can be summarized as follows: in the 10th century, Western Europe was a highly fragmented territory, covered with forests, with still a relatively high number of pagans and a population that in its majority was made up of peasants and ‘minor’ in might and actual power kings.⁴⁹ It was truly so and hardly anyone would argue with this statement. To complete the picture, the view of Jean Delumeau can be added here: he states that the West of that time was “too rural, too fragmented and too uneducated to be susceptible to strong propaganda currents”.⁵⁰

One should not, however, confuse notions with primarily solid spiritual and religious dimensions that are by definition intrinsic to scholars, with the views of the common “silent multitude”, if we were to use the definition by Aron Gurevich. It would hardly be plausible to expect that the majority of the latter were intrigued by the *End of the world*, and even less so that they were acquainted with the works of St. Augustine and, in particular, with Chapter xx from his book *City of God*, where he dispelled the vision of an imminent End (with regard to the notion of a so-called thousand-year reign). The masses would also have been quite unlikely able to leave behind any visible, i.e. written, records of their visions and fears. As a result, one cannot seek and expect to find a pervasive fear of the year 1000 among all three main ‘estates’ of the West, but only among certain erudite representatives of the two superior ones: *the prayers* (oratores) and *the warriors* (bellatores). Such accounts indeed exist, and they stem from different parts of Western Europe at that. Furthermore, they have appeared not only prior to or around the year 1000, but also later, during the 11th and the 12th centuries.

Before turning our attention to the analysis of specific texts from Christian Western Europe in the period before and around the year 1000, I think it is important to take at least a brief look at one of the primary texts that has re-actualized the apocalyptic expectations in Christian Europe after the beginning of the 8th century. The work in question is the renowned *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. The latest research points to the year 691/692 as the most probable date when this text was written.⁵¹ The place of its origin has

49 See Duby 1967, 10.

50 See Delumeau 2002, 308.

51 See Reinink 1984, 195–209; Reinink 1988, 82–111; Reinink 1992, 149–187; cf. McGinn 1979b, 70; see also Alexander 1985; cf. Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 20 and n. 47, 93.

long since been associated with the lands of Syria,⁵² with the specific context being Byzantium's fight against the Arab threat most likely during the times of the basileus Justinian II (685–695; 705–711). Although the author of this work remains anonymous, he is known by the name of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. It is assumed that the person behind this name was either the Bishop of Pathara in Lycia, Methodius (3rd–4th century, † 310), or his namesake, the Patriarch of Constantinople Methodius the Confessor (842–846), or even some Nestorian from Syria.⁵³ The manuscript in question presents the history of the world, from Adam to the Second Coming of Christ,⁵⁴ placed within the framework of the renowned *topos* of the seven millennia before the end of the world. This work played a pivotal role in the Christian world of that time, which can be seen from the quick emergence of a number of translations of the text in the main liturgical languages of Europe: in Greek, at around 700 or the early 8th century; in Latin, after the first decade of the same century; and also in Old Church Slavonic, at the very beginning of the 10th century.⁵⁵ The manuscript was also translated into Armenian and Arabic.⁵⁶ By the 12th–13th centuries, the *Apocalypse* was often used not only in the name of imperial propaganda, during the confrontation with the Papacy, but also in relation to the legend about the Ten Tribes of Israel, as well as a tool for anti-Islamic propaganda and during the threat of the Mongol invasion of Europe. All these different contexts of its usage just serve to emphasize its paramount popularity,⁵⁷ as well as the strong apocalyptic tone that the work was undoubtedly charged with.

The work of Pseudo-Methodius quickly became one of the 'fundamental' apocalyptic texts, predicting that the ruler who would stop the Islamic offensive of the 'Ishmaelites' (the Arabs) would be none other than the 'Roman Emperor', i.e. the Byzantine basileus. In this way, the unknown author of the *Apocalypse* presented Byzantium as the 'new Rome', Daniel's fourth kingdom.⁵⁸ The devastation caused by the Arabs would, however, affect not only the lands of the Byzantines, but also those of ancient Persia, Cilicia, Syria, etc. These events were expected to take place before the *End of Times* and that is probably why the *Apocalypse* gained such popularity: it presented a dramatic picture of the epic battle between God's chosen emperor and the forces of evil.⁵⁹

52 Cf. Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 66 and n. 7.

53 Alexander 1973, 21–27, esp. 21; *Uchenie ob Antikhriste* 2000, 436 and n. 132.

54 Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 161.

55 McGinn 1979b, 72; see also Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 145 and n. 14 and 15.

56 Istrin 1897, 22–23; *Uchenie ob Antikhriste* 2000, 436 ff.

57 McGinn 1979b, 73.

58 McGinn 1979b, 71.

59 McGinn 1979b, 72.

The so-called ‘unclean peoples of Gog and Magog’ would appear suddenly, wrote Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, and penetrate beyond “the wall of Alexander the Great” into the world of civilization. They would come “from the North” to punish all the Christians who had slipped into sin and “lawlessness” (for further details, see below, Chapter 2, as well as parts of Chapter 3). It was predicted that, after the victory of the ‘Romans’ and their Last Emperor over the ‘Ishmaelites’, a true peace would come on earth, as well as abundance and a lack of fear. This prophecy is completed by the vision of the Last (Roman) Emperor’s death in Jerusalem, before which the basileus would give over his crown and scepter to God (at Golgotha), i.e. would relinquish his powers. From then on would follow the days and years of the Son of Perdition, or Antichrist. He would, in turn, be swept away before Judgment Day by the forces of light, usually led by the heavenly army of St. Michael the Archangel.⁶⁰ In this context, Paul Alexander regards as very significant the fact that nowhere in the Holy Scripture is there a mention of a Roman emperor defeating a hostile army and thereafter surrendering his power namely in Jerusalem.⁶¹ It should also be noted that a number of motifs from this ‘archetypal’ work that subsequently appeared in the various versions, were changed, transformed, and also influenced by other, older written traditions like the one of the Tiburtine Sibyl and Daniel’s prophecies. Of special significance for our thesis, however, is the fact that the unknown author directly states already in the title that the emphasis of his work shall fall on the story about “the kings and the last days and years”. Thus, the text is not so much about the expectations of the individual man before the *End of Times*, but rather about the Empire and its last ruler and hence, about its (and his) fate before Judgment Day! It is this focus on the imperial aspect that lies at the base of a number of conclusions of mine, enunciated further on in the three chapters of this book.

And so, after having acquainted ourselves with Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara and some of his main ideas, let us now examine some examples of the notions about the impending *End* in Western Europe by looking at specific texts from the second half of the 10th century. The most renowned written document of this time period (from the mid-10th century) is authored by Adso, an abbot of the Montier-en-Der Abbey in Northeastern France. This work is often dated even more precisely—between 945 and 954, while Paul Magdalino

60 See Vasiliev 1946, 237–248; Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 21–22, 24, 59, 65, 90, 161, 174–179; Alexander 1978c, 1–15; Alexander 1985, 151–184 (on the Last Roman Emperor), esp. 163, 174, 178), 193–225 (The Legend of Antichrist); Reinink 1988, 82–111; Reinink 1992, 149–187.

61 Alexander 1985, 174.

even points to a specific year, 953 or 954.⁶² It is written in response to a letter by Queen Gerberga, the wife of King Louis IV (936–954), the ruler of West Francia. Adso was born about 910, became abbot of the formerly Benedictine, later Cluniac Montier-en-Der Abbey, and died in 992 while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.⁶³ In his writings about the *End of the world* and especially about Antichrist, Abbot Adso was completely dependent on the patristic tradition, as well as on Bede the Venerable and Haimo of Auxerre, authors from the 8th and 9th century, respectively, with regard to the computistical calculations and commentary on the *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*.⁶⁴

The work of the abbot of Montier-en-Der bore the title *De ortu et tempore Antichristi* and rapidly became a fundamental text for the legend of Antichrist in the West. It has long been known that in the 11th and 12th centuries alone, this text has been preserved in no less than seven different revisions in Latin, which circulated under the names of prestigious figures such as Augustine, Alcuin, and Anselm of Canterbury.⁶⁵

It is important to note as well that Adso's *Letter* was written at a time when the lands of King Louis IV (the lands of Western Europe as a whole) were under threat from the Magyars (who had attacked Burgundy several times already in 930–937) and the Normans, some of whom had already settled in present-day Northern France (Normandy) after the beginning of the 10th century. It was their bands that roamed in lands near Normandy in the 920s and 930s, for example, in Brittany; such bands were also known much later, along the southwestern Atlantic coast of Francia (in the 960s). In other words, the queen viewed these invaders as a clear sign of the coming of the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog' and the *End of the world*. Of course, the Norman attacks on the West Franks were nothing new, since the raids from the North (mainly coming from the territories of Denmark and Norway) had been a fact already during the last decades of the 8th century. It even came to the point where the king of West Francia, Charles III (also called Charles the Simple, 893–923), gave the Vikings, led by the Norman Rollo, lands to settle in—in the territories of present-day Northern France that would later become fittingly known as Normandy. This occurred almost a century before the anticipated *End of the world* in the year 1000 and was legitimized by the so-called Treaty

62 Magdalino 2005, 46, also citing other, older views; Istrin 1897, 16, also dates it to 954; cf McGinn 1979, 82—"about 950".

63 McGinn 1979b, 82.

64 McGinn 1979, 84, 87; McGinn 1979b, 82–83.

65 McGinn 1979b, 84 and n. 21; McGinn 1979, 88. The text of the *Letter* in English, see in McGinn 1979, 89–96.

of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte (in 911).⁶⁶ In the words of the renowned 10th-century writer from the lands of the West Franks, and specifically the Aquitaine region, Adémar de Chabannes, “what was once known as Neustria” in his time was called “Northmania”. As Liliana Simeonova points out, this is the only instance in his work where this kind of distinction is made; writers of that time tended to call ‘Normans’ all ‘people of the North’ who engaged in piracy.⁶⁷ However, it seems more important to note the following: it was Louis IV who was taken hostage by the same ‘Frankish’ Normans and later kept in captivity in Laon, while his son Charles was placed in custody and imprisoned in Rouen. These facts have been described by the Saxon chronicler Widukind of Corvey (c. 925–c. 973), in his work, “Deeds of the Saxons or Three Books of Annals” (*Res gestae Saxonicae sive annalium libri tres*, II. 39).⁶⁸

These ‘Northern people’, known to the inhabitants of the lands of the former great empire of Charlemagne as ‘pirates’, ‘pagans’, ‘savages’ and even worse—as practitioners of human sacrifice, quite understandably instilled real fear among the subjects of the kings of both the West and the East Franks. Their way of life was especially well-documented by several historians from the East Francia (for example, Adam of Bremen and Thietmar of Merseburg), although a West Frankish author such as Dudo (c. 965–1043) from the Saint-Quentin Abbey did not fail to mention such facts about the Scandinavians that proved to be all too disturbing for the Christian souls.⁶⁹ Especially curious is the confusion of ‘Dania’ with ‘Dacia’ (at the Ister/Danube River) in the writings of the aforementioned Dudo on the Normans in North Francia. This could be due to the influence of Virgil’s *Aeneid* and *Getica* by Jordanes.⁷⁰ It could also be the result not only of his erudition, but also of his desire to present their ancestors as having lived in ancient times closer to such an important center of civilization as the Eastern Roman Empire with its capital Constantinople, and thus to possibly mitigate the most negative descriptions of them in his work.

It is hardly coincidental that Liliana Simeonova is inclined to state that Dudo “presents the ‘Northern people’ from Normandy in a positive light, in contrast to the other Vikings”.⁷¹ This ‘matrix’—about the ‘bad Danes’ who ravaged towns and plundered monasteries in Normandy as opposed to the ‘good

66 For further details on these settlers, see Simeonova 2008, 231–233 and 234–237.

67 Simeonova 2008, 230–231.

68 Simeonova 2008, 222.

69 For more details on Dudo and his work, see Simeonova 2008, 232–237, and for the text on human sacrifices—p. 235, ch. II; on Thietmar of Merseburg and Adam of Bremen and their descriptions of the Scandinavians, see Simeonova 2008, 221–226.

70 Simeonova 2008, 234.

71 Simeonova 2008, 235.

Normans' who afterwards rebuilt the abbeys and towns from the ashes—was largely set by Dudo and can also be found in the books by later Norman authors from the 11th–12th centuries.⁷²

How did Adso react in this situation, full of fear of the Normans and of the new invaders from the East, the Magyars? He calmed Queen Gerberga by devising a rather sophisticated scheme of melding the well-known tradition of presenting Antichrist with the contemporary political situation and, specifically, with the theme of the durability of the Empire.⁷³ While it was true that the old Roman Empire had been eradicated ("in ruins", in the original text—*Author's note*), wrote the abbot in his letter to Gerberga, after the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 the Franks had become its successors, both *de facto* and *de jure*. Thus, until the Frankish kings were on the throne, this Roman legacy could not be destroyed. In other words, the Frankish stability was a condition for postponing the arrival of Judgment Day and the coming of Antichrist. The last Frankish king would also be the Last Emperor, continued Adso, and he would be the one who would willingly leave his crown and scepter in Jerusalem, this being the sign that the Christian Roman Empire had come to its end.⁷⁴ Let us recall that this motif can also be found among the Byzantines and the Bulgarians (*cf.* the Bulgarian story about "Khagan Mikhail who leaves his crown in Jerusalem"!). In short, Adso suggested, in a visionary way, that continuity existed between the Roman and the Frankish Empires, i.e. the very existence of an *empire*, first a *Roman* one and then a *Christian* one, would delay the eschatological *End*.⁷⁵ Robert Konrad, however, draws attention to an important characteristic of Adso's writings: his text never refers to the *center* Rome, only to Jerusalem,⁷⁶ although the empire Adso envisioned is both Roman and Christian. Could it be that Adso followed the tradition of the Last Emperor, typical for the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara in its Latin translation, wonders Bernard McGinn, and offers the following response: it would be best to leave this question open.

Also well known is something else: in his letter to Queen Gerberga, the abbot did not use the so-called Tiburtine (Sibylline) tradition to describe the delayed *End of the world*.⁷⁷ Whatever the truth behind the prototype used by Adso to present the Last Emperor as the link between the Franks and the Romans, one thing remains certain: this is a western adaptation, maybe the

72 For specific names and works, see Simeonova 2008, 246–247.

73 McGinn 1979b, 83.

74 McGinn 1979, 93; Verhelst 2003, 82–83.

75 Verhelst 2003, 84.

76 Konrad 1964, 92–94.

77 McGinn 1979b, 83 and n. 11, 12 and 13.

first of its kind, of the well-known Syrian (and later, Byzantine) legend about the Last Emperor, popularized by the work of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara after the end of the 7th century.⁷⁸

Let us consider some further examples. Another prominent writer working around the same time as Adso was Thietland, the second abbot of Einsiedeln, who was already at the monastery by 943 (and died c. 964). The Benedictine monastery itself was founded in 934 by Eberhard from Strasburg, who later became its first abbot, although hermits had already been living in the area after Benno settled there in 928. At some point, the site became known as 'Meinrad's cell', named after a monk from Reichenau who had come to live there in 933. It must be noted that this particular place in Swabia was under the personal protection of Emperor Otto I, as well as the fact that in the mid-10th century, Swabia was heavily attacked and ravaged by the Magyars. The local population also suffered from the strifes of the local notables. Towards the middle of the century, all this uncertainty led to the spread of gloom among the locals, and to an overwhelming sense of inability to resist evil and stop the accumulating misfortunes. Their despondency made them expect even worse things to happen in the future, including the arrival of Antichrist before the *End of the world*.⁷⁹ And in the words of Richard Emmerson, by the mid-10th century the tradition of Antichrist's coming on earth was already sufficiently well-rooted in the minds of the Western people.⁸⁰

It is in such a context that Thietland lived and worked in, and it is therefore hardly surprising that in his exegesis on St. Paul's *Second Thessalonians*, he also noted the anticipation of the Second Advent, naturally placed in direct connection to the coming of Antichrist. The abbot paid special attention to the people in the area who did not behave as Christians, stating that they had fallen in the grip of the delusions of Antichrist. He was also genuinely concerned about the widespread corruption and violence that prevailed in his time (especially among the local people), as well as about the oppression and devastations caused by the invaders. Such a recounting of the facts from the mid-10th century was undoubtedly essential for the abbot, in order for him to adequately begin his reflections on the coming of Antichrist. He, too, did not fail to mention the well-known biblical theme of the rise of one nation against another before the *End*. And just like Adso of Montier-en-Der, he, too, believed the Carolingians to have continued the Roman Empire, although he did not

78 McGinn 1979b, 83.

79 Cartwright 2003, 93–95; on the pessimism that took hold of people in the 10th century in particular, see Fichtenau 1991, 381–387.

80 Emmerson 1981, 74.

divulge any information as to whether the upheaval of the peoples was already a fact during his time and whether the Roman Empire still existed.

Like Adso, Abbot Thietland was also of the opinion that Antichrist would turn out to be a normal human being upon his arrival on earth, and on this issue he was inclined to agree with St. Paul the Apostle, whom he also quoted. At the same time, Thietland remained true to the tradition that regarded Antichrist as the mirror image of Jesus Christ, i.e. His complete opposite in everything. But unlike Adso, Thietland did not agree with the supposition that Antichrist would go to Jerusalem, circumcise himself there, and rebuild the Temple. In this regard, the abbot of Einsiedeln stands closer to the tradition of St. Augustine, although in some places his commentary does diverge slightly from the theories of the saint. In order to comment upon some passages on Antichrist from *2 Thessalonians*, 2:8, Thietland is forced to enter into an extensive exegesis on *Revelation* 20:1–3, 7, where it is described how the devil shall be released a thousand years after he has been bound by the Angel of God, and will then lead the multitude of 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog' to punish 'the chosen people'. For the abbot of Einsiedeln, the countdown of these thousand years had begun with the Passion of Christ, which meant that they would end at around 1033. With regard to the exegesis, his notion about the thousand years is more literal than symbolical in nature, as is the interpretation of St. Augustine. And when these thousand years had come to an end and the year 1033 drew near, Thietland, following the prophet Daniel and St. Augustine's *City of God* rather than St. John's *Revelation*, predicted that Antichrist would be loosed to reign only for a short period of time in the scope of three and a half years. In the words of Steven Cartwright, unlike Haimo of Auxerre and other earlier commentators of the *Revelation*, Thietland does not view these thousand years as a symbolic number, but as a literal one, i.e. for him, they represent his vision of the impending *End of the world* in the year 1033.⁸¹

A number of other texts from the period between the mid-10th to the end of the 11th century can also be mentioned here, all of them dealing with the same issues surrounding the expectations of the enlightened circles regarding *Judgment Day* around the year 1000 and afterwards. One of the authors that are highly relevant for the present study and date from the years around and immediately after the year 1000, especially with regard to the impending year 1033, i.e. a millennium after the Passion of Christ, is the well-known Raoul

81 For further details, see Cartwright 2003, 93–99. Cf. Haimo of Auxerre: 'Millenarius numerus in Scriptura pro perfectione rei ponitur ... Et ideo hic numerus propter sui perfectionem omne significat tempus praesens, a Domini scilicet passione usque ad finem saeculi ...' (*Patrologia Latina* 117: 1182BC).

(Rodulfus) Glaber.⁸² Georges Duby calls him “an excellent observer”, “the best of all”, and also—fascinating “to the historian of ideologies or dreams”.⁸³ Of course, it goes without saying that Glaber’s main work, a chronicle named *Historiarum Libri Quinque*, or “History in five books from 900 AD to 1044 AD” (with the subtitle, “Contemporary History”), is full of distortions of the finer details of historical reality. The important thing in this case is that Glaber collected various accounts from his times in order to ‘piece together’ the general mood of his contemporaries, in particular, their anticipation of something ‘new’ to appear along with the impending *End*, marked by prophecies and all kinds of strange phenomena. Raoul Glaber did not fail to mention the invasions of the infidels (*sic*) during the 10th century, including among them not only the Saracens, but also the Normans and the Magyars.⁸⁴

Born in Burgundy and heavily influenced by the Cluniac reform movement, Glaber lived most of his life between Auxerre, Cluny and Saint-Bénigne—an area which at that time was left with no king and no local duke. Glaber spent his life reflecting on the manifold wondrous portents and signs of nature, as well as the God-inspired prophecies of wise men, instilling as much hope as fear of the impending *End*;⁸⁵ he included all of them in his fourfold division of divinity. The latter is expectedly based on a series of symbolic and meaningful associations of the number 4, as seen in various phenomena: the four Gospels, the four virtues, the four rivers in Paradise, the four cardinal points, the four basic elements: air, fire, water and earth, and the four periods in human history. This quadripartition, as Glaber himself points out, is based on the teachings of “the Greek fathers”. He was of the opinion that even after the seventh day of creation, God continued to instruct the minds of men by revealing more frequently portentous signs every six thousand years.⁸⁶

Raoul Glaber adds one more thing to these famous quaternities and the four-fold diagram in general: the belief that all earthly things strive to rise heavenwards and will be aided in this by the four angels of history who will help the *earthly* (4, i.e. the square) to ascend to the heavens, i.e. to 3 (in terms of the circle as a shape, infinite and with allusions of immobility), in order to be eternalized.

According to Georges Duby, Raoul Glaber believed in the existence of four ages; and although the *End of Times* did not occur in the year 1000, no fifth age

82 See the text, in Rodulfus Glaber, 2002.

83 Duby 1991, 236, 238.

84 Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 32 ff. (Bk. I, v.).

85 Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 44–45 (Bk. I, v, 25, 26.).

86 Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 44–45 (Bk. I, v, 26); see also Duby 1991, 236–238.

would be coming.⁸⁷ At the same time, in his First book the Burgundian historian specifically states that all things have taken “human form in this sixth age of the earthly world”. This notion was first introduced by St. Augustine in his ninth treatise on the Gospel of John (2:1–2 : “... the world we now live in has six ages, and this one is the sixth. The first one is from Adam to Noah [...], the sixth is from John the Baptist to the end of the world”; the last age would end with the Second Coming). Glaber also specifically noted that “in the seventh (age) of this world’s mass of diverse troubles, so that it may most certainly find a suitable end, consisting in repose for itself, for Him from whom whatsoever has had being took its start”.⁸⁸ Let us take special note of this passage about the overlapping of the *beginning* and the *end*, because it will also have significance with some interpretations of the Bulgarian ‘salvational’ *case* after 1018, which will be discussed in the last chapter of this book.

For Glaber, nowhere else were the many differences (between classes and *ordines*, genders, social groups, etc.) so insignificant or, indeed, almost non-existent, as in the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and also in one other phenomenon that shall be discussed in greater detail further on: the gatherings of the so-called Peace of God. There, through the effects of spiritual exaltation and various purifying acts (fasting, abstinence, etc.) people could achieve something that was a kind of abatement from sin. The latter allowed the society to return to equality as it was portended as the heavenly equality in Heaven and on earth—as the one that existed in the monastery, i.e. the four-fold heavenly order in earthly form.⁸⁹

Raoul Glaber believed that mankind should make peace with its God, especially since it became evident that no *End of the world* came in the year 1000. Such a reconciliation could be achieved mostly through a penitential journey, for the salvation of all—irrespective of gender, property status and estate—that would naturally lead first and foremost to the place that was both the Beginning and the promised End: Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulcher.⁹⁰ Duby is probably right in saying that the whole story of Raoul Glaber “moves back and forth between two poles: Jerusalem and Cluny”.⁹¹

But it was not only the lands of the *Center* and the *West* of Europe that were under threat of invasions during the 10th and 11th centuries. The fear of an

87 On these and other views of Duby regarding the different estates and historical phenomena in general, see Duby 1991, 238–240.

88 Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 46–47 (Bk. 1, v, 26.).

89 Duby 1991, 242.

90 On the city of Jerusalem as seen through the eyes of prophets, chroniclers, pilgrims and common visitors, see, for instance, Peters 1985, as well as Chareyron 2005.

91 Duby 1991, 242.

enemy even greater than the Magyars and the Vikings had returned after the 970s from the utmost southwestern parts of the continent. That *arch*-enemy of Western Christianity at the time was the Islamic Caliphate of Cordoba. After 977 and up until 1001/1002, Al-Mansur (939–1001; from 981 onwards he was vizier of the Caliph of Cordoba) attempted to reinstate the rule of Islam over the territory of present-day Spain with a series of military campaigns. Thus, in 985 he sacked Barcelona, and in 997 he destroyed the famed basilica of the most renowned Christian spiritual center of the Pyrenees, that at Santiago de Compostela. Eventually this grueling struggle for supremacy over the Pyrenees between the Saracens and the Christians came to an end with a victory for the Christian army, and in 1002 the Saracens were forced to recede to the south.⁹² At the same time, by 966–970, Scandinavian pirates were roaming the southwestern coast of present-day France; some of them reached the shores of Spain and even managed to capture the cathedral at Compostela.⁹³

1.2.2 *The Peace of God Movement and the Year 1000*

No discussion of the expectations about the *End of Times* in the West would be complete without the mention of a phenomenon which, albeit of different dimensions, was nonetheless chronologically bound to the year 1000: the so-called Peace of God movement. The author of this book, like so many others before him, including Dominique Barthélemy, Thomas Gergen, etc., is inclined to see in this *movement* not just a simple association with the thousandth year in the narrow sense of the word, but a set of attitudes and shared activities of a whole generation, whose life passed under the sign of various acts of a different, also religious, character. This generation could be provisionally situated in time between the 980s and the 1030s, and whether we choose to call it ‘a millennium/millennaristic generation’ or not is a separate question.

There is no need to dwell at length on the well-known thesis that every ruler, especially an emperor/basileus/tsar, is by presumption a ‘peacemaker’. This statement applies in greatest force to the medieval Christian rulers in particular. It is also quite unnecessary to quote the many passages of the Old Testament and especially the New Testament dealing with *peace* and the directly associated with it *love* of God and fellowmen. These are both essential and implementable conditions for the fulfillment of the promised salvation of mankind at the Second Coming of Christ. This is why *love* as well as *peace* became the main pillars of Christian morality and value system.

92 See the description in Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 80 ff. (Bk. II, ix.).

93 Simeonova 2008, 153.

The movement emerged in present-day Southern France at the end of the 10th century—the plan was developed in 989–990 at the abbey of Charroux in the Duchy of Poitou and at Narbonne, but was put forward at Limoges, at Le Puy, and at Anse, located near Lyon. This led to its rapid spread during the following 11th century over the whole of Western Europe; some historians also associate it with the rise of the phenomenon known as 'feudalism' or 'feudal changes'.⁹⁴ According to Georges Duby, this 'peace' remained within the framework of the Carolingian system of government, i.e. in the old well-known mainstream of the peace of the king, with regard to the manner in which control was exercised or justice rendered. The new 'peace' from the end of the 10th century was proclaimed at the same place (in type and nature), i.e. at assemblies of free men, which had been occurring already in the 9th century, in meadows and, in general, outside city walls, and were known as general assemblies.⁹⁵

Several historians, however, see some, albeit minor, differences, which in my opinion deserve their due attention. A more serious and in-depth examination of seemingly small details will reveal that the movement was not that similar to the practices imposed by Charlemagne. First and foremost, during these gatherings from the late 10th century, the place which a century earlier was occupied by the throne of the ruler was now taken by the holy remains of saints, brought from every corner of the province especially for the occasion. It is known from the *Revelation* of St. John that it would be the saints who would be standing on the right side of Jesus Christ during His Second Coming. It is then evident that the message given by these piled relics was quite different from the one typical of the general assemblies of the 9th century. Certainly, the intent of these acts was to achieve a much more visual sacralization of the overall deed. Georges Duby, albeit viewing this issue from a very different

94 See Duby 1991, 169; Le Goff 2005, 46; further information on the *Movement* is also found in Goetz 1992, 259–279; Callahan 1991, 32–49; Barthélemy 1997, 3–35; Barthélemy 1999. On the development of the process in the late 10th century in Aquitaine in particular, see Head 1999, 656–686, and 674–676 for the act of Limoges. On the discussion regarding its 'feudal' dimensions, see for instance, Bisson 1994, 6–42, as well as the debates in the response to this article and on the theme of the 'feudal revolution' in general, see the journal 'Past and Present', t. 152, 1996—the reply of Dominique Barthélemy and Steven White, 196–223, as well as that of Chris Wickham, the late Timothy Reuter and Thomas Bisson in the same journal, 1997, t. 155, 177–225; on the overall contest by several institutions of the so-called feudalism in the West, see the classic research of Brown 1974, 1063–1088, as well as Reynolds 1994. On the legal practices in the 11th century, which were connected to the 'Peace of God' movement, see Gergen 2002, 11–27. Gergen sees "three main schools", as regards the *Movement's* interpretations in science (Gergen 2002, 13 ff.).

95 Duby 1991, 169 and 171–173.

angle, is probably right in seeking in these gatherings the first emerging outlines of the so-called three orders (*tres ordines*) in Western Europe. Among them, the leading ones were ‘the warriors’ and ‘the prayers’ (*bellatores* and *oratores*). According to the same renowned French historian, interdictions again became the mechanism by which rulings were enforced, just like in the previous Carolingian era, with the only difference being that now instead of the king acting as an intermediary these interdictions were directly imposed in the name of God. In this way, it appeared that God was acting without any intermediaries by prohibiting attacks on the men of the *clerus* and violations against the immunity of the churches, as well as pillaging of the property of the poor, the confiscation of their livestock and appropriation of their physical labor, etc.⁹⁶ All these prescriptions and interdictions impose moral norms on the secular power and ‘the powers that be’ taken in their entirety.

In particular, the five bishops that met in Aquitaine (at a synod at Poitiers, sometime just before or in the year 1000) strove their best to assert that they were acting “for the restoration of peace and justice” and even deemed it necessary to decree this with a specially written document. They cited as precedent both the already mentioned actions taken a few years earlier in Charroux and, respectively, in Limoges.⁹⁷ This, of course, does not mean that the *Movement* had a unified ideology from its very onset; rather, it gradually gained force, evolving its purposes and methods over time, especially during the four-five decades following the 990s.⁹⁸

Over the years after 994, in many regions of Western Europe, depending on the extent to which the Peace of God movement had spread, it became evident that a new division was beginning to take form in this part of the Christian civilization. In the place of the old traditional distinction between ‘princes’ and the ‘commoners’ came a new division, between ‘farmers’ (since they weren’t ‘warriors’, *bellatores*) and ‘heroes’ (this term applied not only to the national rulers, but also to all the men armed by these same rulers to assist in combat, i.e. horsemen, knights and the like, who all became mercenaries in a way).⁹⁹ Unfortunately, it was these ‘middlemen’ between the empowered and the farming villagers who most often became the cause of all kinds of wrongdoings, violence and injustices committed against the common unarmed people. This is why, and with good reason, they became the main target of the Peace of God movement, which attempted to build various kinds of restraints

96 Duby 1991, 169.

97 Head 1999, 656.

98 Head 1999, 658.

99 Duby 1991, 170.

and prohibitions against the illegitimate violence. Thus, by 1015, the idea had emerged that chivalry should be constrained by means of a special oath. This practice would subsequently have a crucial impact: all bearing a sword would be set apart, separated, isolated in a single 'corpus' (in the sense of a 'corpse', a 'body'—*Author's note*) in a specific way—with an oath and moral code—from the common unarmed people. The new practices were naturally arranged in such a way as to fit in their lifestyle. And so, these 'horsemen' (the Latin term *miles* which had obvious references to war was substituted with another, also well known to the laity: *caballarius*, cf. *cavallo*, the word for "horse" in some Romance languages) had to impose upon themselves self-restraints and ethic standards of conduct, as well as obligations for the benefit of the whole society. The Peace of God movement gradually spread across Northern France, including Burgundy, where this happened in the form of an oath that was required of all knights.¹⁰⁰ It cannot, however, be denied that the initial and strongest impulse, with the greatest impact for the subsequent development of the Peace of God movement, both in the north and in the south (in Catalonia, for instance), came precisely from Aquitaine.¹⁰¹

In 1024, a proclamation of worldwide peace was read at a special council in the diocese of Auxerre (Burgundy), convened by order of the king of Francia, Robert the Pious, and Emperor Henry II (1002–1024). At this point the *Peace of God* had apparently turned into the prerogative of the power elite, essentially becoming 'king's peace', and in some regions, as was the case with Normandy, in particular,—'ducal peace'. It turned out that this kind of peace in particular was one of the main instruments which helped establish a strong and stable kingship in some places; in this way it soon lost its eschatological dimension with which it had been rooted in the minds of some people around the year 1000. And yet, this *Peace of God* remained a religious ideal.¹⁰²

Evidently, with the approach of the year 1000 (or 1033), people in some regions of Christian Western Europe began to feel the advent of something new in society, in addition to the search for the principles of a new order based on repentance. It is no coincidence that Raoul Glaber¹⁰³ also pointed out that with the approach of the thousandth year from the Passion of Christ (i.e. the year 1033), the cry for 'Peace of God' was getting stronger and stronger in such acts as the desire for a complete cleansing of sins. To overcome the latter, Glaber

100 Duby 1991, 171.

101 Head 1999, 657–658.

102 Le Goff 2005, 47; see also Duby 1991, 172–174: he speaks of the event from 1024 as "mere adaptations of the old Carolingian public oaths to the new configuration of social relations", associating them with "the collapse of the monarchy".

103 Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 194–197 (Bk. IV, v).

specifically refers to the obligation to fast and to avoid any kind of incest, polygamy and fornication.

In his turn, Jacques Le Goff draws attention to another fact that is quite significant for the topic at hand: that “Christian peace was a sacred eschatological concept”, a sort of prelude and prefiguration of the peace that reigned in Paradise. For the renowned French historian, it was the religious fervor that was perceived as the essential feature and key element of this movement. Not incidentally, the foremost ‘actors’ in it were the Church and the common villagers. The movement caused the establishment of rules for the protection of the weak and oppressed: peasants, women, pilgrims, merchants and in some cases, even ecclesiastics. In the face of “Europe of the armed”, the Peace of God movement chose to prioritize “Europe of the unarmed”.¹⁰⁴

The result of these actions was not the elimination of violence altogether, but rather its channeling and regulation within limits with the help of rules. This, in turn, led to the idea of the Truce of God, which called for weapons to be ‘put aside’ at some point. This applied to all those with power, not merely the kings. In this sense, the new order went even further than the traditional practices of the past: all adult males regardless of their status and ‘order’ (*ordo*) ceased to be under the protection of the Peace of God the moment they reached for their swords; clergymen also quit the Peace if they took up arms. Conversely, warriors who decided to lay down their weapons and enter the movement in a spirit of penitence could remain in it as long as they remained without their armor.¹⁰⁵

This ‘network of compromises’, built by the episcopate and the *seigneurs*, which also included, to various degrees, the commoners, created a number of further conditions for the emergence of new phenomena in the West, while also giving the impulse for the further development of some forgotten ones. They would determine the appearance of many processes in the centuries to come. The most significant change of all, brought on by the movement, was in the status quo between secular and ecclesiastical power: it blurred the strict distinctions between the jurisdiction of the court of the counts of Poitou and that of the court of Heaven.¹⁰⁶ The greater social changes that came partly as a result of the synods in Aquitaine and other places in Western Europe in the late 10th and the first half of the 11th century, affected many aspects of the lives

104 Le Goff 2005, 46–47; see also Duby 1991, 170, 172–173.

105 Duby 1991, 170.

106 Head 1999, 686.

of western European societies and especially the ones such as pilgrimage, the worship of relics and of saints, the First Crusade, etc.¹⁰⁷

1.2.3 *The Year 1000 and the Victory of the Cross in the North and the Center of Europe*

At present, we are unable to find a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the adoption of Christianity by many European peoples after the second half of the 10th century and shortly before the year 1000, and that time-frame. Nevertheless, the facts that I will divulge below should motivate us to consider at least some possible connections between the fear of the *End* and the fact that around the year 1000, Europe was still full of unconverted ethnic groups that could not have been anticipating the *End of Times* or a possible Salvation. We should keep in mind that, in contrast to Byzantium, where any centralized missionary efforts were rare, except for certain periods (in the 6th and 9th centuries), in the West missions were deemed important, to say the least. The latter had its roots in the well-known passages from the Holy Scripture and especially in *Matthew 24:14* where the following is said: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Based on various accounts of an enhanced missionary activity in the West, Jacques Le Goff is inclined to talk about a "new Europe" (the quotation marks are by him) which had emerged around the year 1000, by associating the imperial policies of the Ottonians with the conversion of the "newcomers" as he called them, i.e. the Scandinavians, the Hungarians and the Slavic peoples.¹⁰⁸ Le Goff divides these "newcomers" into the above-mentioned three ethnic groups and explicitly states that "the slow process of their Christianization was speeded up by the atmosphere around the year 1000".¹⁰⁹

He uses the name "Scandinavians" to refer to the Vikings (Normans) in particular. The population of the Danish-controlled Icelandic territories partly converted to Christianity at the very end of the 10th century, and by the year 1000 it already had its own 'constitution' that allowed it to remain largely independent from the Danes. The Norwegian king Olaf Tryggvason (995–1000) sent the missionary Stefnir Thorgilsson to Iceland, but his attempts to win over the locals in the name of Christ proved to be much too drastic, and

107 Among the many titles on the topic see, for instance, Landes 1991, 573–593; Töpfer 1992, 41–57; Callahan 1992, 165–183.

108 Le Goff 2005, 41 ff.

109 Le Goff 2005, 43.

he was banished from the island. The second missionary sent by King Olaf, Tangbrand, also failed in his endeavor to proselytize among the local population and in 999 he, too, was forced to leave. It was not until the arrival of two Icelanders that the situation changed: they succeeded in convincing the Althing, the national assembly, to allow the country to adopt Christianity. This became reality on 24 June 1000: the people had to cease all pagan practices and the temples and statues had to be destroyed. The death of Olaf that followed shortly thereafter led to the return of paganism, but the next Norwegian king, St. Olaf (1015–1030), managed to convince the Althing to ban paganism after 1016; during the following decades a local ecclesiastical organization was also established on the island.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, Denmark saw the construction of many monasteries, especially in the period between 1018 and 1033, when the Danish—and the English—throne was occupied by Cnut/Canute the Great (he will be discussed also in Chapter 2 of this book).

Ascending the throne in Norway, St. Olaf wholeheartedly encouraged the establishment of the Christian faith that had been introduced by Olaf Tryggvason. The canonization of St. Olaf can be seen as an element of the well-known practice of the Papacy at that time, namely to canonize European kings who had either converted their own peoples or had made great efforts during their rule to establish the faith that had recently been adopted by their countries. In Sweden, Olaf Skötkonung became the first Swedish Christian king at the very beginning of the 11th century.¹¹¹ Another essential addition here are the so-called Eastern Vikings, i.e. the Rus' (also called Varangians/Varyags) who were also christened shortly before the year 1000, in 988/989, though not by the hands of the pope, but by the Byzantine basileus Basil II (976–1025).

Next among the 'newcomers' in Europe who entered Christendom during the second half of the 10th century, but established it namely in the year 1000, were the Magyars from Central Europe. Soon after the Battle of Lechfeld (955), they were subjected to missionary activity from the West: the Papacy, the Germans and also some Slavic-speaking missionaries; but also from the Southeast, from the Byzantines and the Bulgarians.¹¹² It must be said that the Western Latin-speaking missions had a stronger influence over the Magyar kings and their court. The first phase of conversion that occurred during the 970s did not succeed in creating a stable base for Christianity in Hungary, but with the ascension of King Istvan (King Saint Stephen, 997/1000–1038) to the

110 Le Goff 2005, 43; for further details, see Simeonova 2008, 121–124.

111 Le Goff 2005, 43.

112 On the latter, see Shepard 2011, 119 [No. VII].

throne, along with his baptism in 995, the second phase proved to be more effective from the year 1000 onwards. King Istvan established the first ten bishoprics in Hungary and decreed that each village should build a church. He, as well as his son Imre (Emerich), were both canonized soon after their death.¹¹³

The third and final group of these 'newcomers', according to Le Goff, was related to some of the so-called western Slavs, with the main thing here being the establishment of an independent Polish archbishopric in Gniezno (in 999), by special permission of Emperor Otto III (983–1002) (see here, below). Poland officially entered the fold of Christianity, also as a state, after the baptism of King Mieszko I (c. 935–† 992) in 966. Another noteworthy detail are the attempts to convert the pagan Prussians made by an ethnic Czech, the martyr-to-be St. Adalbert of Prague, who subjected himself to this ordeal shortly before the year 1000, only to be met with defeat. Regardless of this, by the beginning of the 11th century almost all of Central Europe was already Christianized. If we also take into account the peoples of the North, it becomes clear that already before the end of the 11th century, Christianity had become the official religion across almost all of Europe—with the exception of the pagan Prussians and Lithuanians,¹¹⁴ as well as the Muslim Moors in Spain and the Bulgar Muslims along the Volga and Kama Rivers. Shortly afterwards began the active missionary efforts to convert the various Pecheneg groups, both by the Eastern and by the Western Church.¹¹⁵

Raoul Glaber offers an exceptional view on these events, and especially their interpretation. He directly asks why the Christianization of the above-mentioned pagans "has often occurred in the northern and western regions of our world, but never has such a thing been heard about the eastern and southern regions". The logic in his answer is quite unexpected for the modern reader: the reason, in his opinion (which is based on a "true portent"), was that the position of Christ's Cross on Golgotha was the way it was, as stated in the legend and later retold in the subsequent tradition. For Glaber, the Cross that the Savior was nailed to remained behind His head and it was there, in the East, that the "immature tribes", as he called them, lived. The West, on the other hand, was before the gaze of the Lord and that predetermined its role to fill the souls of the natives with the light of Christ's faith so as to soften their manners with the Word of God. On the left side was the South, tumultuous because

113 Le Goff 2005, 44; on the canonization of kings in Hungary, see also Klaniczay 2007.

114 Le Goff 2005, 44–45.

115 See Mako 2011, 33–62; on the exceptionally active Bruno of Querfurt, who stayed among them for five months between 1008 and 1009, see in general Wenskus 1956; Wood 2001; Mako 2011, 50–55.

“of the barbaric peoples” that inhabited it.¹¹⁶ As shall be seen in the next chapter, according to a very old tradition, the *West* and the *North* in Eurasia were associated with death and evil, but not with light. Glaber, however, in an attempt to remain true to the historical truth about the Christianization processes that were taking place during the second half of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century, changed the old (also geographically determined) principles by altering the world directions and their symbolic meanings—as seen through the prism of the good/evil and light/dark oppositions—in a convenient explanatory scheme with regard to the events in Central and North Europe.

1.2.4 *On the Threshold between the 10th and 11th Centuries. The Ottonians: Symbolic Acts and Symbolic Topoi*

No less important than the above-discussed texts (such as those by Adso of Montier-en-Der, Thietland, etc.), if not more significant for the present research, in my opinion, were some symbolic acts by Otto III (983–1002), who ascended the imperial throne at the young age of three. These actions took place shortly before the year 1000.¹¹⁷ Following Petr Bitsilli here, let me note that as a cultural period, the Christian Middle Ages were marked by hierarchy and symbolism. According to Bitsilli, these two traits can be found everywhere: in the literature, science and visual arts of the period, as well as in the perception of the world in its entirety.¹¹⁸ The symbolic way of thinking, continues Bitsilli, bridges the chasm between the two worlds: the visual one, the one of experience, with the invisible or heavenly one.¹¹⁹ Although these observations of Petr Bitsilli are undoubtedly true, I would further expand the above-mentioned two traits with a third one—or rather a factor typical of that era: the conservative tradition. Tradition is nothing more than *memory* which is repeated continuously with the help of the corresponding (symbolic) rituals or texts and images within a given collective of people; however, it is also often renovated. Furthermore, each symbolic act, especially if it is made by an emperor, at a symbolic place and time, must be correctly interpreted also as a message and possibly as an attempt to renovate (*renovatio*).

So, what can be derived from some of the symbolic acts of Otto III who was undoubtedly influenced by the Sibylline eschatological traditions of the Apennines? Those traditions received a significant boost on the peninsula during the 10th century, which was much more visible when compared with

116 Rodulfus Glaber 2002, 42–43 (Bk. 1, v, 24).

117 A classic work on the topic of Otto III's reign is the one by Schramm 1992 (repr.), 87–187.

118 Bitsilli 1995, 12, 14–15.

119 Bitsilli 1995, 21.

the same traditions in Francia and the lands populated by Germans. Johannes Fried is inclined to view as highly probable the existence of a direct connection between the discussion regarding the *End of the world* and the imperial program for the 'renovation' of the Empire at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century, since the sheer number and quality of references in this very direction, and in connection with the name of Otto III, is truly impressive.¹²⁰ Here are some details in this aspect which illustrate Fried's hypothesis, although, as Levi Roach recently pointed out, the sources from the time of Otto III's reign over the Empire in the west do not explicitly state anything in this regard. Nevertheless, as Levi Roach also admits, the cumulative effect of these sources dating mostly from the period between 996 and 1002 does imply certain conclusions precisely in the direction of adherence to the expectations for the *End of the world*.¹²¹

First of all, when the still quite young Otto III was preparing for his imperial coronation in Rome in 996 (on 21.05. 996), he wore a cloak decorated with scenes from the *Revelation* of St. John the Apostle. This information can be found in *Miracula S. Alexii*. It also contains an important addition: when the ceremony was over, Otto III bestowed this clearly significant cloak to the Monastery of Saints Boniface and Alexius on the Aventine,¹²² i.e. Otto III began his imperial rule with eschatological concerns in mind.¹²³ This is the earliest evidence of the depiction of such images outside of the illumination tradition. The so-called *Bamberg Apocalypse*, one of the several famous manuscripts from Reichenau that is perhaps the emblematic example of the art of illumination and that in many ways has given rise to the trend of depicting the Apocalypse in illuminations, was probably dedicated to Otto III. This codex (*Bamberg Staatsbibliothek Msc. Bibl. 140*) contains the oldest depiction of Antichrist outside the tradition of Beatus of Liébana, and also implies definite apocalyptic expectations.¹²⁴

Another codex from Bamberg includes two manuscripts (*Bamberg Staatsbibliothek MSS 22* and 76), that are bound together in a single body and were most probably also a part of Otto III's library.¹²⁵ And another thing regarding the Monastery of Saints Boniface and Alexius in Rome: it served as a sanctuary

120 For more details, see Fried 2003, 40 ff. (The original of the same article was published as, Johannes Fried 1989. "Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende."—*Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 45, no. 2, 385–473).

121 Roach 2013, 78 and n. 11.

122 *Miracula S. Alexii* 1841, 619–620.

123 Roach 2013, 78.

124 See Mayr-Harting 1991/11, 10–24, 215–228; Fried 2003, 40–41; Roach 2013, 86.

125 Roach 2013, 85.

(in the late 980s and the early 990s) to none other than a most significant figure that helped Otto III impose new cults in Europe: the later Saint Adalbert (Voitech) of Prague,¹²⁶ who has already been mentioned and who will receive his due attention below.

Secondly, the library of Otto III contained some extremely valuable in terms of illumination manuscripts dealing with subject matter from the *Revelation* and the predictions of prophets. As Florentine Mütterich points out,¹²⁷ also part of Otto III's library were exegeses on four books of the Jewish Bible: on the prophet Isaiah and the prophet Daniel, *Song of Songs*, and *Wisdom of Solomon*. Such a selection from the Old Testament is indeed quite revealing, since the prophet Isaiah came at a very critical moment in Jewish history: the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the siege of Jerusalem in the second half of the 8th century BC. In turn, the book of the prophet Daniel, which reached its peak in popularity during the period between the 3rd century BC and the 2nd century AD, served as a Jewish Old Testament equivalent of the *Revelation*, since it contained literal parallels with the latter. *Song of Songs* and *Wisdom of Solomon* are poetic projections of the ideal world. Just like St. John's *Revelation*, each one of these texts uses dreams and visionariness as literary devices. Moreover, the illuminations in them have no precedent¹²⁸ and what their authors chose to depict not only alludes to their eschatological interest, but also to some highly probable apocalyptic considerations.

Following the Byzantine manner of depicting the basilei, Emperor Otto III went beyond the Carolingian tradition.¹²⁹ This statement has a logical explanation: in 972, Otto III's father, Otto I, in his desire to reduce the tensions between his own empire and the Byzantine one, married his son Otto (the later Otto II) to the Byzantine princess Theophano.¹³⁰ The marriage was concluded in Rome, and Theophano received not only the crown, but also the rights of a co-ruler. She acted as regent for her young son Otto III between 983 and 991, when her death left him a complete orphan at the tender age of eleven. Thus, the Byzantine influence from the era of the Macedonian dynasty at the

126 Roach 2013, 79.

127 See Mütterich 1986, 11–25; see the description of the illuminations also in Tholl 2003, 232–235.

128 Tholl 2003, 232 and n. 7; see, however, Mayr-Harting 1991/ii, 31–43.

129 On the use of *spolia* in Carolingian art and their remodelling by Otto III and Henry II, see Garrison 2012.

130 Jenkins 1966, 321–325; Ciggaar 2004, 266; for further details, see also *Kaiserin Teophanu* 1991; *The Empress Theophano* 1995; *The Empress Theophano* 2002; on the dynastic marriages on the eve of the year 1000 in particular, see Shepard 2003a, 1–33.

court of Otto III, forced to ascend the throne early, is quite understandable.¹³¹ The Mainz *Prayer Book*, for instance, which was created for the same emperor, depicted him in the manner of the Byzantine tradition: Otto III honors the Lord, *rex illustrissimus regum*, as a dedication in the text states, in the position of *proskynesis*. This position, as has long been well known, was primarily typical of the shahinshahs of ancient and medieval Iran, from where it subsequently entered Byzantium. The emperor there is without a crown but with his hands covered; the allusion undoubtedly being to the heavenly *Parousia* (*cf.* 1 Tim. 6:14) and to the notion of the Lamb (the Lord Jesus Christ) as a “Lord of lords and King of kings” (*cf.* Rev. 17:14).¹³²

Further evidence of the apocalyptic expectations that marked the years of Otto III's reign is the following fact: his adviser and chancellor in the period 994–1002, Archbishop Heribert of Cologne (999–1021), received a copy of the treatise *De antichristo* by Adso of Montier-en-Der. This transcript soon began to be viewed as the “original” and therefore, quite understandably, had a significant subsequent effect.¹³³

The connection to Adso can also be seen in another aspect, and in a different text that also deals with the same imperial ideals of Otto III: it is Leo de Vercelli's *Versus de Gregorio et Ottone augusto* (c. 998). There, Babylon and Greece (Byzantium) are mentioned as nations subject to Otto. Even though these accounts do not adequately reflect the reality of the times, they are nevertheless eloquent enough with regard to the imagined Empire of the *Last Times*. Most likely, this is an allusion to the well-known dream of Nebuchadnezzar about the four kingdoms.¹³⁴ According to Knut Görich, the passage about Babylon and Greece is quite similar to a passage in the work of Adso.¹³⁵ Levi Roach, in turn, adds that Leo of Vercelli openly supported the apocalyptic implications of Otto III and his program for the *renovation* of the Roman Empire.¹³⁶

Thirdly, realizing his sinfulness (could this have anything to do with the harsh punishments he allotted to Crescentius and John Philagathos in 998?) and also seeking an actual political and religious gain, Otto III visited Gniezno (Poland) in 1000 as a pilgrim.¹³⁷ It was there, and with his mere presence, that he sanctioned and gave a boost to the already formed worship of the miracu-

131 Ciggaar 2004, 266–267, 268.

132 Fried 2003, 40.

133 Fried 2003, 41.

134 Leo de Vercelli 1937, 479; see also Mayr-Harting 1991/11, 50–51, and Roach 2013, 85.

135 Görich 1993, 198–199.

136 Roach 2013, 86.

137 Schramm 1992 (repr.), 138.

lous relics of the above-mentioned St. Adalbert of Prague who died a martyr's death on 23 April 997 at the hands of Prussian pagans during his mission among them.¹³⁸

Immediately after the martyrdom of Voitech, Otto III requested for a monastery to be built in his name and commissioned a *Vita*, implying in this manner his desire for a quick canonization of the martyr.¹³⁹ At the same time, the emperor favored the Polish king of the time, Bolesław Chrobry (992–1025), who received the same support also from the successor of Otto III, Henry II (1002–1024). It was during his trip to Gniezno that Otto III met with Bolesław and bestowed upon him firstly, a crown, and secondly—the lance of St. Maurice,¹⁴⁰ which was not only a notable sign of imperial power, but also a very revered relic, since it contained nails from the Cross of the Lord. Thirdly, Otto III gave his consent to become godfather to Bolesław's son.¹⁴¹

Upon his return from Gniezno, the emperor spent the Feast of the Assumption (15 August 1000) in Rome, where people from the procession carried images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as the famed icon of Christ, known as the *Acheiropoieta* and stored in the Sancta Sanctorum at the Lateran Palace. Such processions, bearing icons of Jesus Christ and the Mother of God, were also held outside Rome, indirectly reflecting the sentiments and expectations that had emerged on the Apennines in the summer of 1000. Moreover, this procession bore overt references to similar ceremonial processions with icons of the Blessed Virgin and Jesus Christ held on the streets of Constantinople, where the icon of the Holy Mother seemed to pass by the icon of her Son. And finally, something in addition to the above-said regarding the purposely sought parallelism between the empires of the East and the West: a special hymn was written for this occasion, the *Carmen in assumptio sanctae Mariae in nocte quando tabula portatur*, that represented the actual meeting between the East and the West with the words, “*dat scola Graeca melos et plebs Romana susurros.*” Although the actual name of the Holy Mother (Mary) was rarely used in Byzantium, as can be seen from the beginning of this hymn,

138 See Fried 1989; Smith 2005, 79; Roach 2013, 79; among the many titles dealing with the life and acts of Voitech, who later became bishop of Prague and then Saint Adalbert, see also Kuznetsova 2002, 50–52, 56; Floria 2002, 196, 211–224, 226–236, 240–242, 245, 248, 254–255, 258–264; Wood 2001, 207–225.

139 Roach 2013, 79.

140 See here, Beckwith 1996, 129, ill. 109.

141 For more information on this meeting, the relations between the two rulers and the symbolic meaning of the lance of St. Maurice as a sign of power, see Althoff 1996, 127–147; Warner 2001, 271–272; Floria 2002, 232, 235–239, 242, 245–246, 250; Wiszewski 2010, 145, 150–151, 189–191, 195, 410–418, 425; Shepard 2011b, 27–48 [No. x]. For the eastern policy of Bolesław Chrobry, see Kollinger 2014.

the assimilation of Byzantine traditions further on in the text is clearly visible, since the form mostly used is the typical Byzantine *Theotokos* (Mother of God).¹⁴² Some assume that all this was done deliberately, as a sign of respect to the Greek-speaking community living in the Eternal City, as well as to the numerous monasteries with Byzantine monks located inside the city.¹⁴³

Shortly before the advent of the year 1000, however, something unexpected occurred, and this needs to be addressed here, at least briefly. It was undoubtedly an important event, since it was related to the symbolic place of Rome. Almost immediately after Emperor Otto III left the city, the people there, led by the already mentioned Crescentius de Nomentana, rebelled and appointed an (anti-)pope, the Greek-speaking Johannes Philagathos, who originated from Southern Italy and was close to the mother of Otto III, the Byzantine Theophano.¹⁴⁴ In the *Annals of Quedlinburg* these events from 996–997 have been interpreted from an apocalyptic point of view: such an approach is evident from the labeling of Crescentius as a “minister of Satan”.¹⁴⁵ And another significant addition to the *Annals* that indeed deserves special attention with regard to the context: these *Annals* were written on the basis of the now-lost *Annales Hildesheimenses majores*, a set of annals from the same period kept at Hildesheim. Hildesheim’s bishop at that point was Bernward who had close ties with the imperial court. Gerbertus (Gerbert) of Aurillac, himself an adviser to the ruler, may have also contributed to such an attitude towards Crescentius, whom he attacked with the words *membrum diaboli* even prior to the events in question. On the basis of these accounts Levi Roach concludes that the events following 997 have spurred at least some degree of apocalyptic ‘disquiet’ within the imperial court circles.¹⁴⁶

In 998, Otto III took back Rome and ordered Johannes Philagathos to be blinded and expelled from the city,¹⁴⁷ and for Crescentius to be killed and his body put on display. Such a brutal action against these prominent rebels does not fit in any way in the tradition of the (generally) merciful politics of the Ottonian emperors, so this pitiless act by Otto III has always troubled historians. In the opinion of Levi Roach, the latter could be successfully interpreted through the apocalyptic rhetoric: if the emperor viewed this confrontation in the Holy City of Rome in terms of the cosmic battle against the approaching Antichrist, then the lack of mercy on his part could easily be explained; Otto

142 Fried 2003, 41; Ciggaar 2004, 267.

143 Ciggaar 2004, 267.

144 Ciggaar 2004, 267; Roach 2013, 81.

145 *Annales Quedliburgenses*, s.a. 998, 498; Roach 2013, 82.

146 Roach 2013, 82–83.

147 Ciggaar 2004, 267.

thought that he was dealing not with ordinary rebelling men, but with ‘ministers of Satan’ and ‘heresiarchs’.¹⁴⁸

Whatever the reason behind this brutal decision, one thing is clear: 997–998 was the time when Otto III surrounded himself with the circle of advisers that grew to be highly instrumental for the decisions he would make during the next phase of his reign. That was also the moment when his program *renovatio imperii* was put into motion, a program about which there is an abundance of eloquent accounts. For instance, Otto III began using lead seals for his *charters* rather than the wax ones preferred by his predecessors. It was hardly coincidental then that these lead bulls had *renovatio imperii* inscribed on them. Although it would be difficult to agree with Percy E. Schramm’s assertion that this program for the *renovation of the Empire* was coherent and consciously structured in advance,¹⁴⁹ there is no doubt that its focus visibly oscillates between Rome and Aachen, i.e. it is clearly imperial in its essence. Equally clear is that the emperor was interested in eschatology not so much *per se*, but with regard to the mental connections that it allowed him to draw between Rome, the Carolingian past and the *End of Times*.¹⁵⁰ It is hardly coincidental that Otto III gifted so many costly works of art to the treasury at Aachen¹⁵¹ or that Henry II subsequently found it appropriate to transfer some of them to Bamberg.¹⁵² In this respect, however, the practice of transferring expensive works of art with a specific symbolic meaning and ideological subtext should not be considered a novelty since it was known in the West also in earlier times; one such example is the so-called *Codex Aureus* of Charles the Bald which was taken from the treasury of Saint-Denis Abbey and given to St. Emmeram (Regensburg) by Arnulf of Carinthia.¹⁵³

As is well known, Otto III liked his palace in Aachen and—after Rome—that was where he enjoyed spending time throughout most of the year.¹⁵⁴ The relation of this place to Emperor Charlemagne († 814) is undeniable, and Otto III made it explicit also in another, specific way: in the *arenga* of a special grant he issued, the emperor specifically mentioned not only his parents, but also Charlemagne, quoting 1 Cor. 10:11, which contains some apocalyptic nuances. Biblical quotes have rarely been used in the diplomatic documents of the Ottonians, and references to the inevitable *End* have never been found in

148 Roach 2013, 83; see also Rubenstein 2011, 199–203.

149 See the critique in Roach 2013, 84.

150 Roach 2013, 101.

151 For further details, see Garrison 2012, ch. 2.

152 Garrison 2012, ch. 4.

153 Garrison 2012, 127, 155.

154 See Schramm 1992 (repr.), 139.

other contemporary charters, which leads to the conclusion that this is (in the very least) a deviation from the standard diplomatic practice.¹⁵⁵ Seen against the background of some of the other documents issued by the imperial chancellery by order of Otto III, these allusions do not seem incidental at all.

Apocalyptic references are often found in other imperial documents, especially those relating to Aachen, Charlemagne and St. Adalbert. When placed within the 'network of coordinates' comprised of *the capital* Aachen, *the memory* of Charlemagne, *the cult* of St. Adalbert of Prague (by 1001, the Hungarians had also obtained his relics, and, as is well known, King Stephen/Istvan ascended the throne in 1000, again thanks to Otto III and Pope Sylvester II), and the expectations regarding the *End of the world*, as well as the notion that Rome was the fourth and final kingdom according to Daniel's prophecy, all these facts, along with others that shall be discussed later on, allow for the possible interpretation of Otto's reign around the year 1000 as a rule marked by the anticipation of the imminent coming of Antichrist on earth.¹⁵⁶

Otto III made an even more important journey, again a penitential one, to a place in Western Europe that was truly emblematic at the time: to Monte Gargano, Apulia (today's Puglia in Southern Italy). It was made precisely at the beginning of 999, during Lent. This Christian center has a long history; it was even used by the Longobards for their political and religious legitimation after they settled on the Apennines during the second half of the 6th century. It is also the site of a major pilgrimage center, related to the cult of St. Michael the Archangel that held a great significance in Europe during the Early Middle Ages. St. Michael was directly connected to the Second Coming of Christ and the Salvation.¹⁵⁷ The miracle story of Monte Gargano dates from the 8th or 9th century, while its Byzantine version in Greek was probably written in the late 9th or the early 10th century, i.e. during the Byzantine re-conquest of these territories.¹⁵⁸

During the period between the 10th and the 11th centuries, Monte Gargano was at the height of its influence among the Christian faithful. The aura of this holy center spread far and wide not only among the senior clergy who visited the site during the 10th century (for instance, Odo of Cluny, John of Gorze, Wilhelm/Guglielmo of Volpiano), but also among the ordinary pilgrims on

155 Roach 2013, 80.

156 See Roach 2013, 79, 81, 85.

157 As was already mentioned at the beginning of this book, the author is currently working on a study of the connection between St. Michael the Archangel and the notions about Judgment Day and the *End of the world* that existed in Europe during the 10th–12th centuries. It will contain a lot more details on this topic.

158 Peers 2001, 166.

their way to Jerusalem; many of them, especially the Normans and Catalans, stopped there to worship St. Michael the Archangel.¹⁵⁹ The center of St. Michael's cult at Mount Gargano had gained such great spiritual influence by the 10th–11th centuries that similar shrines in the Apennines and in other parts of Western Europe attempted to imitate its location and the form of its church.¹⁶⁰ For instance, the foundation of the Mont-Saint Michel Abbey in Normandy on a rocky mount is a self-conscious act of modeling in accordance with the 'matrix' set by the sanctuary at Monte Gargano. Moreover, this imitation model was further achieved by other conscious measures: the direct 'importation' of monks from Monte Gargano, as well as the transfer of a part of the altar stone as a relic from Gargano.¹⁶¹ In many parts of Western Europe, church buildings that were almost identical in shape and were erected on hills and mountain tops became a real symbol of the presence and the protection of St. Michael the Archangel.¹⁶²

Otto III, together with Franco, the bishop of Worms, journeyed barefooted to Monte Gargano at the insistence of the venerable ascetic St. Nilus.¹⁶³ This journey should also be viewed in the context of the spiritual influence wielded by Otto III's entourage during the last three years of his life. As was mentioned earlier, at that point of time Otto III had not only surrounded himself with a group of prominent intellectuals, but also with trusted ascetics who probably drew his attention to the apocalyptic literature with regard to the year 1000. According to Jean-Marie Sansterre, this austere act, along with the subsequent penitential journeys of the emperor, could all be viewed as an essential part of this *renovatio*.¹⁶⁴ It can be assumed with good reason that the *renovation* of the Empire was intended to somehow delay the coming of the *End of Times*, since the existence of the Empire in the West was seen as a fundamental condition for the continued existence of this world.

It should be noted in particular that on this penitential journey the emperor crossed the distance from Rome to Monte Gargano barefoot, just as each pilgrim is expected to make his way to Golgotha—barefooted, in the literal and figurative sense of the word. In fact, this practice is much more ancient in

159 Callahan 2003, 185 and n. 32, 33 and 34; cf. France 1991, 185–205.

160 Peers 2001, 170; for further details, see Otranto, Carletti 1990, 57–71.

161 Peers 2001, 170.

162 Peers 2001, 171.

163 *Vita de S. Nilo*, quoted from Callahan 2003, 185, n. 35; on the meeting of St. Nilus and the emperor, and the latter's stay for fourteenth days in a cavern there situated not faraway from a church dedicated to Jesus Christ, see Duby 1981, 67.

164 On the ascetics' influence on Otto III in general, see Sansterre 1989, 377–412.

origin. In the *Book of Exodus* in the Old Testament God explicitly tells Moses, showing him the Unburnt Bush: “[Then he said,] ‘Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’” (Ex. 3:5). The Greek philosophers, along with the sages of Ancient Greece, in general did not fail to draw attention to this practice. They also emphasized the need to appear barefoot before the sacred and the places of his/her secrets and mysteries. Iamblichus,¹⁶⁵ for instance, instructed that man should “sacrifice and worship barefoot”.¹⁶⁶

It is well known that on the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel, it is customary to read passages from the *Book of Revelation*; something which is generally not typical for the other feast days of the Church year. Another detail also worth keeping in mind: the notion of St. Michael the Archangel as the master of the scales of justice that weigh the souls on Judgment Day began to take form in the 9th century.¹⁶⁷

The series of similar symbolic acts continued with a mutual penitential withdrawal by Otto III and Franco of Worms, with whom the emperor travelled to Subiaco where he laid the foundations of a church of St. Michael the Archangel and St. Adalbert. Upon his return in the late summer of 999, Otto III convened a meeting with his main counselors at the Abbey of Farfa (located north of Rome) and announced that he planned some extraordinary events for the coming year 1000.¹⁶⁸ In the opinion of Levi Roach, this meeting had a very important contextual significance with regard to the future. The emperor issued two documents for the Abbey of Farfa, one of which ended with a very striking spiritual sanction. It contained a threat to anyone who dared to violate the privileges given, namely that he/she, together with Otto III (!), would answer for his/her deeds on Judgment Day. Such phrasing is highly unusual for the *charters* issued in Italy in the name of Otto III, but it sounds logical in the context of the emperor's penitential acts in the preceding months.¹⁶⁹

It should be noted that Otto III's journey to Gniezno in 1000, which was already mentioned here, was again made during Lent. The connection with the pilgrimages to Monte Gargano and to Subiaco in 999 is indeed quite clear: in-between other matters he had to attend to, the emperor went to pray at the grave of St. Adalbert.¹⁷⁰

165 *Za pitagoreiskiiia zhivot* 82–86.

166 Pitagor i pitagoreitsite 1994, 101.

167 Fried 2003, 59.

168 Schramm 1992 (repr.), 130–131; Roach 2013, 87.

169 Roach 2013, 87, 89.

170 For a detailed analysis, see Althoff 1996, 126–132.

Of special importance here is the fact that the visit to Gniezno was made precisely during Lent, i.e. the liturgical season of penitence. Also hardly coincidental is that Otto returned to Quedlinburg for Easter, and for Pentecost he had to be in Aachen. Such a route, which was made in accordance with the highly significant liturgical feasts at the beginning of the year, was most probably premeditated. This is further supported by the specific phrasing used in Otto's titlature during his journeys in 1000, since it remained unparalleled: *Otto tercius servus Jesu Christi et Romanorum imperator augustus secundum voluntatem Dei salvatoris nostrisque liberatoris* ("Otto III, servant of Jesus Christ and emperor Augustus of the Romans in accordance with the will of God, our Savior and Liberator").¹⁷¹ According to Johannes Fried, this title alludes to some of the teachings of the prophets Isaiah and Daniel, annotated copies of which Otto III owned.¹⁷²

While in Regensburg (i.e. before reaching Aachen), Otto III issued two *charters* (on 6 February 1000), dealing with local spiritual centers. In them, the emperor again raises the issue of possible malefactors who, should they dare violate his orders, would suffer punishments during the *Last Times*. After arriving in Aachen, shortly after Pentecost, Otto III issued a new document dealing with ... *the End of Times*. Thus emerges the connection between apocalypticism-and-eschatology, Aachen and Charlemagne, while the *charters* from Farfa (September 999) actually reveal the beginnings of a real imperial program.¹⁷³

Another act of Otto III also carries an emblematic quality, since it is again part of the same behavioral 'network' of actions. While in Aachen, Otto III ordered the tomb of Charlemagne to be opened, thus clearly signaling a connection between his own authority and the legacy of the first Frankish, but also Roman, emperor after 476. All this was fully in line with Otto's plans for *renovatio imperii*.¹⁷⁴ Here, one can undoubtedly see the influence of the so-called Legend of Charlemagne,¹⁷⁵ which presented the Frankish-and-Roman emperor in the light of the Last Emperor concept that emerged at the very end of the 7th century (most probably around 691/692 in Northern Mesopotamia, according to Gerrit Reinink), and was further developed in the *Apocalypse* of

171 Roach 2013, 89–90.

172 For further details, see Fried 1998, 58–69.

173 Roach 2013, 90–91.

174 See Folz 1950, 76–93; Floria 2002, 250; Roach 2013, 91–93.

175 Folz 1950, 76–93; on the eschatological perspective and motivation behind some of Charlemagne's reformative acts in general, see Latowsky 2008, 153–167; Alberi 2010, 1–20; Gabriele 2011.

Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara.¹⁷⁶ In it, Charlemagne is presented as directly connected to Jerusalem, as can be expected, in light of the Pseudo-Methodius tradition in the West after the beginning of the 8th century. The latter is not surprising, in view of a story that appeared at the end of the 10th century in the *Chronicle of Benedict of Monte Soracte*, which was compiled in a monastery not far from Rome. According to this legend, Charlemagne visited Jerusalem during his lifetime, but before leaving Italy he and his whole entourage stopped at Monte Gargano to receive the blessing of St. Michael the Archangel.¹⁷⁷ Could it be that Otto III was deliberately trying to present himself as following in the footsteps of his renowned predecessor on his journey to Monte Gargano? This could very well be the case, especially if we recall that Otto III had wanted to place his crown at Golgotha, exactly as predicted by Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara—along with having the intention of ordering for himself to be buried in Aachen, near the tomb of the Western Roman Empire's renewer, Charlemagne.¹⁷⁸

At present, Otto's interest in the tomb of Charlemagne is known to have been documented in three separate accounts from the same time period (or slightly later). They include the *Chronicle* of Thietmar of Merseburg, that of Adémar of Chabannes and the so-called *Chronicon Navalicense*. The sources differ on some of the details, but as a whole give quite an accurate picture of the intentions and actions of the emperor.

Although the account in Thietmar's *Chronicle* is the shortest one, it is also nearest to the actual events, both temporally and topographically, i.e. the place of its recording. It recounts that Otto secretly visited the tomb of his great predecessor in Aachen at Pentecost.¹⁷⁹ More details can be found in the work of the Aquitainian monk, Adémar. According to him, Emperor Otto III was inspired to make this visit by a dream in which the location of Charlemagne's tomb was revealed to him. After finding the place, Otto saw Charles the Great himself, seated on his throne. Otto ordered for the throne of his distant imperial predecessor to be raised up for all to see. Then a miracle happened: a stately canon of the church broke his leg, after trying on the crown Charlemagne and comparing his leg to that of the Frankish ruler. Immediately following this sign, Otto III ordered the body of Charlemagne to be reburied

176 Among the many existing studies on this topic, see, for instance, Alexander 1985, 151–184; McGinn 1979b, 32–36; Reinink 1988, 82–111; Reinink 1992, 149–187; Reinink 1992b, 75–86.

177 *Benedicti Sancti Andreae Monachi Chronicon*, ch. 23—cited from Callahan 2003, 185, n. 39.

178 See Sansterre 1989, 403–407; Fried 2003, 59; Callahan 2003, 185; on some of the ideas of Otto and their symbolic realization, see also Warner 1999, 1–18.

179 *Thiethmari Merseburgensis* IV.47.

in the right part of the transept, where it became known for its many signs and miracles. The throne was given to Bolesław Chrobry in exchange for the arm of St. Adalbert.¹⁸⁰

The *Chronicle of Novalesa* (*Chronicon Navaliciense*) dates from the mid-11th century and is the latest of the three sources. There, Otto's actions are presented in the following manner: the emperor disturbed the dead Charlemagne in the presence of only three people: two bishops and Count Otto. The four of them saw Charles the Great seated on his throne, "as if alive" (*ceu vivus*); they neared his throne to say a prayer, cut the emperor's long nails and replaced the tip of his nose with gold before departing.¹⁸¹

While there are different interpretations of the facts described in the above-mentioned three sources,¹⁸² Levi Roach considers the explanation of Knut Görich to be the most probable one: Otto's actions were in fact an unsuccessful attempt to establish a cult of Charlemagne.¹⁸³ It is clear that this is yet another act by Otto III on the eve of the year 1000 that aimed to glorify the empire's capital Aachen, as well as to raise the prestige of Charlemagne; both deeds were in line with Otto's intention for a comprehensive program for *renovatio imperii*.¹⁸⁴ And finally, let us recall that Charlemagne's coronation as emperor of the West on 25 December 800 also had its well-known apocalyptic aspects: the year 800 marked 6000 years from the so-called *Annus Mundi II*. And so, Otto III's reign can in fact be seen as a long series of symbolic acts which are revealed both by the contemporary narratives and by the emperor's deeds and the existing artifacts of the art of illumination.

Again with regard to the worship of St. Michael the Archangel in the German lands, let us note that Italy was not the only country with two main centers for worshipping the archangel (Monte Gargano and San Michele della Chiusa, which shall be discussed below). The Germans, too, had two centers which became the main focus for the veneration of the archangel's might, but possibly also the fear of him, with regard to the descriptions of his role in the *End of Times*, given in St. John's *Revelation*. The first center was established at the very end of the 10th century (in 996) in Hildesheim by the aforementioned Bishop Bernward (993–1022). The second one was located in East Franconia, in the highly significant for the Empire city of Bamberg, and was emblematic for the rule of Otto's successor, Henry II (1002–1024).¹⁸⁵ Like his predecessor,

180 Adémar, *Chronicon*, 1999, 153–154; Roach 2013, 91–92.

181 *Chronicon Novaliciense* 1982, III. 32, 182; on the three sources, see also Roach 2013, 91–92.

182 See a detailed commentary in Roach 2013, 92 and n. 76 and 77.

183 Cited from Roach 2013, 92.

184 Roach 2013, 92.

185 See Beckwith 1996, 147, ill. 134.

Emperor Henry II also visited Monte Gargano, but in 1022, during his last trip to Italy. Georges Duby suggests that Henry II actually believed himself to be the *Last Emperor* who would rule over the world and strive to restore order before Judgment Day.¹⁸⁶

During his third journey to the Apennines, Henry II had a vision in which he witnessed Christ from the *Book of Revelation* in his reign of glory, surrounded by his angels and all of his heavenly court. This vision, however, is known from a later manuscript, dated to the 13th century and again written in Bamberg where Henry II was buried; it appears to have been recorded after the emperor had been declared a saint. The link between Monte Gargano and Otto III and Henry II (1002–1024) clearly had a significant impact on the learned men from their respective courts. As the above indicates, for some German clerics from the Bamberg area this association continued to exist on a mental level also during the 13th century—at least with regard to Henry II.¹⁸⁷

Another connection between the two emperors who ruled around the year 1000 and immediately afterwards (before 1033) also deserves our attention. The above-mentioned *Bamberg Apocalypse*, renowned for its illuminations, was prepared in Reichenau c. 1000, i.e. again during the rule of Otto III. Later, it would be his descendant on the throne, Emperor Henry II, who would gift it to Bamberg.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, the bond between Otto III and Henry II indicates other mystical dimensions with a messianic aspect that most probably had a connection, though rather unclear, to various prophecies regarding the *End of the Empire in the West*. As was said before, Adso of Montier-en-Der stated in his letter to Queen Gerberga that “the last emperor” would be a Frankish one.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps it was from this standpoint that Henry II viewed his future reign, since he changed the motto of the Empire from Otto III’s *renovatio imperii Romani* to *renovatio regni Francorum*, accentuating on the Frankish element and thus presenting himself as a potential Last Emperor.¹⁹⁰ Against this background, Otto’s desire to settle in Rome seems quite understandable.¹⁹¹ He ordered for the imperial palace there to be renovated and moved in it in 998. Thus, he became the first emperor after the early 4th century to rule from the former “center of the world”, although he was forced to leave “the eternal city” already in 1001.¹⁹² He died soon after, from a sudden and severe fever at the young age

186 Duby 1983, 59.

187 Callahan 2003, 186 and n. 42 and 43.

188 Callahan 2003, 186–187.

189 On this passage, see Adso 1976, 26: ‘unus ex regibus Francorum Romanum imperium’.

190 Callahan 2003, n. 41 on p. 199; Smith 2005, 276.

191 On Rome as an imperial capital during the rule of Otto III, see Schramm 1992 (repr.), 168.

192 Schramm 1992 (repr.), 179.

of 21 (on 24 January 1002, near Paterno, north of Rome) and before learning his lesson, as Julia Smith puts it, i.e. that for a transalpine emperor Rome was more useful as a concept and an ideal rather than an actual center from which to rule the empire.¹⁹³

The eschatological 'legacy' between Otto III and his successor Henry II can probably be found in one more aspect. Not only Otto wore a special cloak for his coronation ceremony: this was also done by Henry II, whose cloak has been preserved in Bamberg. This ceremonial cloak illustrates the cosmic dimensions of the imperial dream: it is covered in stars and zodiacal signs, intermingled with images of Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, as well as angels and saints. The cloak's borders were adorned with a telling inscription in Latin, in which Henry II was called "the honor of Europe" and "blessed Caesar Henry", alongside hopes for the residing in eternity God to "increase [the territories] of the empire".¹⁹⁴ Let us not forget, however, that such cloaks were also used by earlier rulers of the West, like Charles the Bald and Otto III, in particular. And, in order to complete the excursus on Otto III and Henry II, let us recall that their rule over the Western Empire almost perfectly matches the reign of the last—and truly significant and renowned for his deeds—Byzantine basileus, Basil II (976–1025). Like both of his western contemporaries, he was also on the throne on the eve of the year 1000 and before the thousandth year from the Resurrection of Christ (1033). In fact, these three emperors from the *East* and the *West* of Europe were at the head of the most powerful states on the European 'Christian' continent during some very interesting and symbolic times: a couple of decades prior to and a couple of decades after the year 1000 (on the times and deeds of Basil II as seen from an apocalyptic viewpoint, see below and in Chapter 2).

1.2.5 *A Look at the Cult of St. Michael the Archangel from the Holy Roman Empire*

Let us now take a closer look at the sanctuary of San Michele della Chiusa. It is located in Piedmont, right next to Turin, and in medieval times was the other prominent site of worship of St. Michael the Archangel by the Christian population of the Apennine area of the Empire. Here, on the peak of a high mount, St. Giovanni Vincentius, bishop from the region of Ravenna, who had later become a hermit in the mountain near Chiusa, built a church c. 978. It was built quickly, following his visions of fire descending from the sky and of St. Michael the Archangel. Both visions were related to the hill mentioned earlier which

193 Smith 2005, 79, 276.

194 See a description of the cloak in Pastoureau, Schmitt 1990, 74–75; see also Le Goff 2005, 48.

St. Giovanni later named *Pirchiriano* (from the Greek *pyr kyriou*, i.e. “divine fire” or “fire of God”). Shortly afterwards, the church was consecrated by the bishop of Turin, Amizo (c. 983–c. 1002). The legend of the aforementioned association between the church and the divine fire quickly spread far and wide and later became instrumental for the great fame of Chiusa. As a result, a monastery was also built there, c. 999, established by Hugo of Montboissier, a pilgrim living in Auvergne who undertook this pious act in an attempt to atone for his sins. Hugo chose Chiusa near Turin because of its ideal location with regard to the constant flow of pilgrims travelling from Francia to Rome.¹⁹⁵

The centers of devotion to St. Michael the Archangel in the German lands of the Empire were equally popular during the aforementioned period. The one in Hildesheim, for instance, quickly became “the art capital of northern Europe”, preserving various masterpieces of early-medieval West European art created during the reign of Otto III. Among them were the famous bronze gates, a special column decorated with scenes from the life of Jesus Christ,¹⁹⁶ and a reliquary containing a piece of the Calvary Cross. The latter was donated to the church personally by Otto III in 993, when his own mentor Bernward ceased his spiritual guidance of the young emperor in order to become bishop, and so on. Shortly before passing away in 1022, Bernward consecrated the church where soon afterwards his body was put to rest. Curiously, his tomb contained motifs which undoubtedly point to his special attitude towards the Last Judgment, just like his contemporaries, the emperors Otto III and Henry II, whom he had served faithfully for so many decades.¹⁹⁷

Bamberg, the other prominent center of devotion to St. Michael in the German lands, was under the direct supervision and care of Henry II, who ordered a special diocese to be established there in 1007. In 1012, on his fortieth birthday, the emperor presided over the consecration of the cathedral there and dedicated the principal altar to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael the Archangel and St. George.¹⁹⁸ This cathedral and Bamberg as a whole were at the center of the sacred imperial imagery during Henry II's reign, which is why he ordered some of the most beautiful illuminated manuscripts created both in his time and the time of his predecessors to be preserved there. Among these manuscripts are the *Gospel Book* of Otto III, considered by some historians to be the culmination of the Ottonian illumination, as well as the *Pericopes Book* of Henry II, which Henry Mayr-Harting calls “the apogee of angelic power

195 *Chronica monasterii Sancti Michaelis Clusini* 1929; Callahan 2003, 186.

196 See Beckwith 1996, 147, ills. 134 and 135.

197 Von den Steinen 1956, 331–335; Callahan 2003, 187.

198 Callahan 2003, 187.

in Ottonian art". A definite addition to these is the outstanding in its quality *Bamberg Apocalypse*, prepared c. 1000.¹⁹⁹

Also in Bamberg and with the support of Henry II, Bishop Eberhard established a new Benedictine center, Michaelsberg, that was yet again dedicated to St. Michael. The event took place in 1015 and the location chosen was once more a high hill that overlooked the town. In 1021, shortly before leaving for the Apennines (in 1022, for a visit to Monte Gargano), Emperor Henry II, together with some clergymen, participated in the consecration of the monastic church of St. Michael. It is very likely that it was on that occasion that Henry II presented the church with a golden *antependium* for its main altar, the piece was subsequently preserved in Basel.²⁰⁰ This famous work of art depicts Jesus Christ, with St. Michael and St. Benedict of Nursia standing on His right side, and on His left, the Archangels Gabriel and Raphael. An interesting addition to the scene are the tiny figurines of Henry II himself and his wife, Cunigunde, positioned at the feet of Jesus. Christ himself is marked by an inscription above His head through the prism of Rev. 19:16, as the King of Kings.²⁰¹ The art and imagery of this work, which were a product of the inventions of Bamberg from that time, clearly exude expectations of the impending *End*.²⁰²

All of the above said, it is clear that by the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century, the *Roman* imperial lands in the West contained at least four large centers of devotion to St. Michael. If we add the great abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy,²⁰³ as well as the churches in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Ireland and elsewhere,²⁰⁴ it becomes quite obvious that the worship of the most significant archangel in the West—with regard to Judgment Day—expectedly culminated precisely between the mid-10th century and the mid-11th century.²⁰⁵

199 For further details, see Mayr-Harting 1991/1, ch. 4, 157–178, 179–201; II, ch. 1, 11–24, 45–48; Mayr-Harting 2002, 172–211, esp. 195–211—on the “illustrations” of the *Gospel Book*, the *Bamberg Apocalypse*, etc.

200 See here, Ill. 6.

201 Mayr-Harting 1991/1, 66.

202 Callahan 2003, 188.

203 The place itself was associated with St. Michael ever since the 8th century, and by 966 it had become a Benedictine monastery; on the cult in the Frankish lands in general, see Vincent et Vincent 2007, 183–207.

204 For further details, see Callahan 2003, 188–189, as well as Picard 2007, 133–146; on the legends about the archangel in medieval England, see Johnson 2005, as well as Jones 2007, 147–182.

205 For a general overview of the cult's manifestations in Western Europe, see, for instance, *Culto e santuari di San Michele* 2007.

The British Isles at that time did not yet have a sanctuary of St. Michael the Archangel that could rival the ones on the Continent, described above. This 'deficiency', however, can be easily overcome if we turn to the literature and art from various parts of Britain stemming from the years between the mid-10th and the mid-11th century. In a separate paragraph below (see below, Chapter 2) I will discuss some of the visions of Ælfric and Wulfstan, archbishop of York, regarding the Viking invasions of the time and their possible connection to the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog'. This is why in the next paragraph I would like to quickly go over some other aspects of the expectations about the *End of the world* that existed in the British lands.

The place and role of St. Michael the Archangel are especially well documented in one of the *Vercelli Homilies* that were part of a codex from the end of the 10th century, written in Old English. The *Vercelli Homilies* demonstrate in fact an eschatological tradition in preaching in England before the time of Ælfric and Wulfstan and are one of the two oldest collections of vernacular sermons (along with the *Blickling Homilies*). The *Homilies* themselves predate the end of the 10th century and are the work of unknown compilers. While they mostly include translations or vernacular adaptations of Latin texts, they also contain influences of apocrypha and Irish writings.²⁰⁶ The latter contrasts wholly with the writings of Ælfric and Wulfstan, who attack the contents of similar homilies in vernacular precisely because of the apocryphal elements there. Instead of apocryphal works, they have relied on the writings of the Church Fathers, and especially on the works of Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great and Bede.²⁰⁷

The *Vercelli Book* contains twenty-three homilies (sermons) and six long poems. They have been preserved since the 11th century in Vercelli.²⁰⁸ In them, St. Michael, together with the Virgin Mary and St. Peter the Apostle, intervenes in the fate of the people during the Last Judgment. St. Michael, in particular, is described as fallen before God on His throne, pleading in prayer at His feet for the souls of the people devoted to him.²⁰⁹ Daniel Callahan points out that a similar motif can also be found in other Old English sermons of the time, in which the pleas of the above-mentioned three holy characters are shown as being effective and even postponing to some extent the coming of the

206 Cubitt 2015, 35–36 and n. 36, 38.

207 Cubitt 2015, 36 with the literature cited in n. 37.

208 See *Vercelli Homilies* 1981; Callahan 2003, 190, and n. 85.

209 *Vercelli Homilies* 1981, 37–38–15th homily; Callahan 2003, 190; Cubitt 2015, 38.

Last Judgment and the destruction of the world, as promised in the *Book of Revelation*.²¹⁰

St. Michael the Archangel is also present in several of the aforementioned *Blickling Homilies*, another collection of sermons in Old English from the end of the 10th century. It is full of the same eschatological foreboding, shared by the learned men of the times, with regard to the final days and the inevitable proximity of the Last Judgment as well as the ‘signs’ before the *End*.²¹¹ The seventeenth sermon, in particular, mentions the dedication of the sanctuary at Monte Gargano to St. Michael the Archangel, which is probably borrowed from an earlier Continental source. The Anglo-Saxon aspect is more visible in the treatment of the archangel in a sermon intended for delivery on Easter and entitled “The End of the World is Near”. It contains the following visions: on the day before the Last Judgment, St. Michael would come with his heavenly retinue and would destroy all the accursed people and then drive them into the abyss of Hell for their disobedience to the will of God. Then all the creatures of the earth would see God’s might, although mankind neither acknowledged His power, nor recognized it. St. Michael the Archangel would then order four trumpets to be blown at the four ends of the world and would thus raise to life all the bodies of the dead.²¹²

Whether this incredible surge in devotion to St. Michael in the West during the period from 950 to 1050 has something to do with the so-called Benedictine centuries, as Daniel Callahan supposes,²¹³ is another matter.

1.2.6 *The Twelfth Century in the West: New Trajectories and Loci/Topoi of the ‘Salvational’ Expectations*

1.2.6.1 Millenarian Explorations during the 12th Century:

the Interpretations and the Promise of Joachim of Fiore

Jean Delumeau is among the authors who see a connection between the millenarian themes that were latently present in Western Europe and the socio-religious upheavals that erupted in Northern and Northwestern Europe in the 11th and the early 12th centuries. Delumeau supports the well-known theory that the millenarianism/chiliasm movement was brought to life in the second half of the 12th century by a Calabrian monk of the Cistercian Order, Joachim

²¹⁰ Callahan 2003, 190.

²¹¹ See Jeffrey 1989, esp. ch. 2; Callahan 2003, 190; Cubitt 2015, 37.

²¹² *Blickling Homilies*, pt. 1, No. 7, quoted from Callahan 2003, 190–191; esp. on the connection between the Descent into Hell and the Last Judgment in Old English texts, see Campbell 1982, 107–158, esp. 133–137 [for a Bulgarian example, see here, Ill. 3].

²¹³ Callahan 2003, 192–193.

of Fiore.²¹⁴ Joachim, who joined the ranks of the Cistercians in the abbey of Sambucina, in his younger years also made a pilgrimage to the Promised Land. It was not until 1171 that he entered the Abbey of Corazzo in Calabria, where he was quickly ordained its abbot and even attempted to integrate the monastery into the Cistercian Order. From the 1180s onwards, he gradually became one of the most renowned apocalyptic authors of the West, as well as one of the most original theoreticians of history in Western tradition.²¹⁵ In the words of Paul Magdalino, Augustine of Hippo's "typological model" of the *End* expected by Christianity, was further actively developed by Western philosophers in the 12th century, reaching its culmination in the ideas of Joachim of Fiore—especially the part regarding the numerical values in history. Meanwhile, nothing similar, either as a separate invention or as a resonance, emerged in the East at this time.²¹⁶

As is known, millenarianism had its onset before the advent of Christian preaching and was closely determined by the messianic expectations of ancient Israel. The latter are clearly stated in the Books of *Isaiah* (54, 55), *Ezekiel* (40–47), *Daniel* (2, 7), as well as among the other prophets of the post-exilic age, which promised the coming of a Messiah, and with it—a period of peace and prosperity on earth.²¹⁷ The Jewish books also advance the view of an intermediate kingdom, between the present time and eternity, which is well-attested in *Book of Jubilees* (22:27), the *Book of Enoch* (61–67) and in the *Fourth Book of Ezra* (7:28). The notion of the Messiah and the *End of the world* was passed on from the Jewish writings and beliefs to Christianity; it can be seen in the famous chapter xx of St. John's *Revelation* (where the Angel of God will bind Satan for a thousand years). The prophecy can also be found, with small variations from the chapter, as Delumeau says,²¹⁸ in the *Letter of Barnabas* (15:4–9).

214 Delumeau 2002, 294; Joachim's true spiritual career path begins among the Benedictine monks in the Abbey of Corazzo, see McGinn 1979b, 126; Whalen 2009, 101.

215 Whalen 2009, 102–103; for more details about his life and ideas, see McGinn 1979b, 126–141, as well as McGinn 1985; see also Daniel 1992, 72–88; Whalen 2009, 100–125. See Reeves 1999, 1–82, on his ideas on the meaning of history, the new spiritual man, and the last world emperor and angelic pope. On the various aspects of his life and work, as well as the spread of his ideas on the Iberian peninsula, Provence and England after his death, and their later reception (in the Early Modern Age) in Britain, Germany, etc., see Reeves 1999, 83–165, and Joachim of Fiore 2013.

216 Magdalino 2008, 120–121. On Joachim's concept of history as a divine pattern of 'twos and threes' as well as the meanings of 'five', 'seven' and 'twelve', see Reeves 1999, 8, 10–13, and Reeves 2001, 281–295.

217 See Rice 2002, 78, ill. 69.

218 Delumeau 2002, 294.

In Western Europe, the 12th century was a time of acute social tensions and intellectual ‘reformatory movements’, which seem to have been reflected in the messianic hopes, along with the increasing belief in the imminent end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. It was these expectations that Joachim of Fiore became an exponent for; he was regarded as a social revolutionary by some, an inspired apocalyptic and visionary by others, and by others still—a dangerous heretic.²¹⁹ According to some authors Joachim died around 1200 or 1201; in Bernard McGinn’s opinion, he was born c. 1135 (in Celico, Calabria) and passed away in 1202.²²⁰ After having a visionary revelation during a pilgrimage, Joachim of Fiore was blessed to experience something similar at least once more, sometime around 1183. This second, vivid spiritual vision was related to a new interpretation of the Bible, which he sought permission to record from Pope Lucius III himself (1181–1185). This occurred during their meeting at Veroli in 1184. The next two popes, Urban III (1185–1187) and Clement III (1187–1191), also gave their formal permission for Joachim to write down his visions and interpretations; the latter even relieved him of his abbatial duties. Around 1188, Joachim of Fiore withdrew to the Sila Plateau and established the monastery of San Giovanni in Fiore. Despite his relocation, the Calabrian remained active not only in his writing, but also in his contacts with high-profile, even royal figures. He met with Emperor Henry VI (1190–1197) during the latter’s siege of Naples, as well as with King Richard I of England (1189–1199), who set forth on a crusade to the Holy Land in 1189; the latter meeting happened at Messina in 1190/1191.²²¹

Joachim of Fiore left some important works. Among them should be especially noted *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, *Liber de Concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, *Liber Figurarum*, and *Psalterium Decem Chordarum*. He developed an original concept of the coming of the Messiah and the transformation of the “earthly kingdom” into God’s kingdom, and not in Heaven, but here, on earth, within the transient time and space. These expectations reflect notions that were typical for the early Christians, namely the ‘landing’ of the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth.²²²

219 Whalen 2009, 100.

220 McGinn 1979b, 126; see also Whalen 2009, 101.

221 Reeves 1999, 22; Whalen 2009, 101. Cf. Reeves 1999, 3, whose dating of the foundation of the monastery San Giovanni in Fiore is 1196.

222 The literature on this issue is practically innumerate—see, for instance, Reeves 1999, 1–28; McGinn 1979b, 130 ff.; Whalen 2009, 100–124; Bitsilli 1995, 147–149, 156–157, 162–165, 167–168, 170–172, 184–185; see also Nedialkova 2006, 52; Shivarov 2013, 128.

Joachim divided the world history into three states (*status*), which corresponded to the three hypostases of God: that of the incorporeal God (the Father), which began with Adam; the *status* of the corporeal God (Jesus Christ); and the *status* of the Holy Spirit.²²³ These three states actually reveal his view on the continuity and the inner coherence of historical ages. The first of them originated with Adam, flourished during the time of Abraham and ended with the coming of Christ on earth; its most distinctive feature was that it followed the Law and the “way of the flesh”. The second one was the Christian age, dominated by the symbol of the Holy Gospel and called “the age of faith”, which was filled with a “mixture of the flesh and the spirit”. It began with Uzziah, reached fruition with the father of St. John the Baptist, Zachariah, and, according to Joachim, would end in his own lifetime. The third *status* had begun with St. Benedict of Nursia and was rapidly developing in the times of Joachim of Fiore. This *status* actually belonged to the future and was marked by the Holy Spirit, which would bestow upon everyone the gift of absolute love, thus completing the “last century” of human evolution on earth and giving an end to the history of humankind. It was this last age that was meant to lead to the establishment of peace and love, and of righteousness and the perfect Kingdom of God right here, on earth.²²⁴

According to Paul Alexander, in contrast to other writers of the Catholic West who wrote about the Christian apocalyptic expectations, Joachim of Fiore did not use the well-known legend of the Last Roman Emperor to re-establish, in the second half of the 12th century, the idea of a future, fairer earthly kingdom, based on brotherly love and abundance, which would precede the Last Judgment and the final Kingdom of God.²²⁵

The threefoldness of the model developed by Joachim is, in fact, its only resemblance to the tripartite ‘historical’ model that was typical for Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara from the late 7th century and contained the first mention of the Last Emperor concept. The Syrian Pseudo-Methodius believed that, chronologically speaking, there was an age of “this world”, an age

223 McGinn 1979b, 134; on the three *status* and their symbols, see also Reeves 1999, 5–7, 11, 13–14, 19, 73, and Whalen 2009, 100, 103, 106–108.

224 For a detailed analysis of Joachim's works dealing with his ideas on the Apocalypse, the *status*, the struggle of the Church against the Empire (the conflict between Frederick I Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III) in light of the interpretation of ‘the seven seals of the Apocalypse’, i.e. the persecution of the Jews in the Old Testament and of the Christians in the New Testament, in the period between 1st and the 12th century, etc., see Whalen 2009, 103–105; see also Barg 1987, 199; Nedialkova 2006, 52; Shivarov 2013, 128.

225 Alexander 1978c, 13–14.

of “the reign of the Last Emperor” (a time of all-encompassing abundance and true justice). Shortly before the coming of Antichrist, the Last Emperor would hand over the *Kingdom* to God with a special gesture: by placing his crown and scepter upon the Cross at Golgotha in Jerusalem. Only after the heavenly forces had conquered Antichrist would Jesus Christ, together with the saints, establish the Kingdom of God. This vision gained numerous followers both in the East and in the West during the Middle Ages. The ideas of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara are, in fact, rooted in the Jewish Old Testament messianic concept that includes a very similar scheme: “this world”, “the word of the Last Emperor=the Messiah before the Last Judgment”, “the world to come”,²²⁶ while Joachim of Fiore took a more innovative approach, associated with the New Testament.

Evidently, Joachim could not easily part with the perception that from a certain point onwards, the “Greeks” (the Byzantines) had distorted the Holy Scripture, thus becoming “schismatics”. Developing his ideas about the future unity of the Church—under Roman primacy, of course—the Calabrian did not fail to elaborate on his views on the “tyranny” of the Constantinople patriarch over the Eastern Church, as well as on the way Byzantine emperors acted more like “pharaohs” rather than “spiritual kings” of Jerusalem.²²⁷ The allusions with the initial chosen people of God and their Egyptian exile can be clearly seen here, transposed on the New Testament times and the situation after the Great Schism of 1054, in particular. The pursuit of such parallels between the two Testaments and between the ‘chosen peoples’ in God’s plan and ‘scenario’ of salvation is among the most significant specifics of Joachim’s conceptualizations. Moreover, the well-known notion, found in the work of Pseudo-Methodius, namely, that the Saracens/Ishmaelites were the peoples destined by God’s will to punish the Christians before the *End of Times*, was creatively processed by Joachim of Fiore into the concept of the punishment meted out by the ‘Ishmaelites’ against the Eastern Greek Empire, as a result of the Byzantines’ rejection of the teachings of the Roman Church. In this explanatory scheme, the parallel is drawn by evoking the Assyrian conquest of Jerusalem and Israel as a whole: the cause of it was the fall of the Jews into idolatry, the latter seen as a ‘precondition’ to what happened to the Byzantines, who lost most of their Empire after rejecting the ‘true’ Christianity professed by the Western Church.²²⁸

Further proof of the Calabrian monk’s innovative approach is the fact that, in contrast to many other medieval visionaries, he preferred to give precedence

226 See Alexander 1978c, 8, 13.

227 Whalen 2009, 110.

228 Whalen 2009, 111–112.

to the third image of God, the Holy Spirit, instead of the second one, Jesus Christ. In this manner, the *End* in his view was not Christcentric, but is bound to the achievement of a higher harmony, which is only possible in the future age of the unseen Holy Spirit. This, however, entailed something quite dangerous for the Church: that Christians should also expect a *new* Testament and a *new* Revelation. Joachim offered his own reading of the *Revelation* of St. John the Evangelist,²²⁹ which revolved around the chiliastic interpretation of the kingdom to come and associated it with the expectation of mankind's continuous improvement on its path of atonement for the original sin. According to Joachim of Fiore, the first two ages unambiguously showed that people were getting ever closer to achieving the strived-for *justice, freedom, goodness* and *truth*. At the end of history inevitably would come the true freedom of the Holy Spirit, since *freedom* was by necessity at the heart of both the Divine and the historical (secular) dialectic. The Calabrian monk believed that, at the *End*, this providential movement would lead to the final victory of the 'City of God', when a real change would shake the earthly *order*, which by then would be under the rule of the Holy Spirit. In this third and last age, the confrontation between state and church would come to an end, and the true ideal in human relations would be realized by the monks. It was predicted that they would become a model for the ethical man of the future and would lead the people on the path of evangelical poverty.²³⁰

Joachim of Fiore predicted that the Kingdom of love and freedom and of absolute truth and perfect peace, i.e. that of the Holy Spirit, would come in 1260 and would exist until the Last Judgment, that is to the *End*.²³¹ The visible Church would let itself be "swallowed" by the spirit of the so-called third *status* at the *End* of this world,²³² distinguished by the full freedom of the Holy Spirit. This would be aided by several factors: the reconciliation between the Greek-speaking Byzantines and the Latin-speaking West, the rise of the clergy and the spiritual order in terms of hierarchy, as well as the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. All of these together would put an end to conflict and war, bring about universal love, and spread the gospel of the Beatitudes to the corners of the earth.²³³

229 McGinn 1979b, 130. On the special place occupied by St. John the Apostle and the symbols from his *Revelation* in the doctrine of Joachim of Fiore, see Reeves 2001, 281–295, esp. 281, 283, 285–286.

230 See Barg 1987, 200; Delumeau 2002, 295; Laughlin 2003, 876; Nedialkova 2006, 52–53.

231 Delumeau 2002, 295.

232 McGinn 1979b, 133–134.

233 McGinn 1979b, 134; Shivarov 2013, 128; Laughlin 2003, 876; Whalen 2009, 101–103.

1.2.6.2 The West Looks to the Far East, or on the Kingdom of Prester John before the Earthly Paradise

The legend of this fabled place near the heavenly realms on earth appeared in the West sometime around the beginning of the 12th century. However, in contrast to the ideas of Joachim of Fiore that dealt with the quest for *salvation* in a spiritual sense, in this case the people of Western Europe imagined a kingdom in the East, a kind of new Promised Land, located near some black people.²³⁴

Before attempting to outline some of the key features of this notion and the *topoi* connected to it, it would be logical to take a look at the level of knowledge among the West European cartographers regarding the division of the world, the *topography* of Paradise and the Promised Land, etc., prior to the 13th century, or in other words, before the above-mentioned kingdom of Prester John appeared—also graphically—on the maps. The literature dealing with the issues at hand is immense in both quantity and quality. With regard to the relevant time period, I have chosen to focus on the research of two authors, Leonid Chekin and Aleksandr Podosinov.²³⁵

In general, the Middle Ages have inherited the ancient concept of the world's division into the three continents, known at that time: Europe, Asia and Africa. They correlate perfectly to the Old Testament image of the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japheth, who were positioned, together with the peoples that descended from them, on each one of the three continents (in the following manner: Ham was in Africa, Shem—in Asia and Japhet was placed in Europe). The described two visions and traditions became the basis for the emergence of the Christian cartographic division and the description-and-depiction of the visible world. Over the centuries, the various types of maps have visualized these concepts in equally different ways, with their respective sacred (for certain reasons and also due to certain archetypes) *topoi*. One popular example are the schematic maps which contraposed the North to the South, i.e. the Rhipaeen Mountains (usually viewed today as the Ural Mountain) and Ethiopia.²³⁶

Another type of logic can be seen in the tradition of the maps created in accordance with the work *Christian Topography* by Cosma Indicopleustes, a Byzantine author from the mid-6th century.²³⁷ However, the maps that became most popular in Western Europe, and in the rest of the Christian world, were the so-called T-maps (also called “*Tau*-maps”, with the variation “T—O”

234 In general, see Delumeau 1992, 99–130, as well as Pirenne 1992.

235 See Chekin 1999; Podosinov 1999. See here, Ills. 4–5.

236 On this type of maps, see Chekin 1999, 15, 74–78.

237 See Chekin 1999, 79–84.

maps), which gave the best visual representation of the division of the known world into three parts according to the continents: the biggest part was taken up by Asia, as the largest continent, followed by the two smaller parts, Africa and Europe.²³⁸

There were also maps which specifically indicated the location of the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog' in the world, like the so-called maps of Lambert of Saint-Omer, for instance, dating from the same 12th century; they were associated with the tradition of the *Cosmography* of Pseudo-Aethicus.²³⁹ In a map of the mentioned type (but of a later period, c. 1290), the text "Gog and Magog" can be seen, along with the corresponding positions of these peoples. The space inhabited by them is either located in Asia, between the Caspian Sea and the so-called Indian Sea, or on a peninsula in the Ocean, near the western coast of the Caspian Sea.²⁴⁰ In other maps from Western Europe, the mentioned 'unclean peoples', which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and 3 of the present book, are positioned on the east coast of the same sea,²⁴¹ on the shore of the Ocean in the farthest northeastern corner.²⁴² Such localizations are also suggested by the literary archetype of this knowledge, the Old Testament and the so-called Legend of Alexander the Great, who enclosed (or locked, according to other versions) the 'unclean peoples' around (or in) the Caucasus Mountains.

Many of the western European maps traditionally also include the four rivers of Paradise, as well as (almost always) the depiction of Jerusalem, next to a cross, as a special center of the world. The *Oxford Map* from Saint John's College is among the oldest in the world with a depicted Jerusalem at its center, although in this case there is a clear allusion to the Bible (*cf.* Ez. 5:5). Some historians, however, are inclined to view this localization of Jerusalem as the result of the influence of the Crusades. This map shows the Cross of Christ, as well as the City of Jerusalem (marked with two crosses), Mount Zion and other holy places.²⁴³

The medieval world was originally focused on the crucifixion of Christ and His passion, as well as on the Golgotha Hill (as will be seen through numerous examples from Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts, discussed in Chapter 3).

238 For further details, see Chekin 1999.

239 See Chekin 1999, 171 ff., 175–176, 205, and especially the maps XIII.3.1, XIII.3.2.

240 Chekin 1999, 175 ff. and maps XIII.3.2–4, X.2.2.

241 Chekin 1999, maps X.7, X.11.2.3, X.12.7—here, these peoples are not identified by name.

242 Chekin 1999, map X.5.1.2.

243 See *Oxford, St. John's College*, 17, f. 6, c. 1090/1100, in Chekin 1999, 59–61, III.2.2. On the images of the Holy City in maps, see Levy-Rubin and Rubin 1996, 352–379.

Even the structure used in the most popular maps, the T-one, was interpreted as the well-known crucifixion cross of the Romans.

While the Christological content of the western maps intensified from the 13th century onwards, an old perception from Antiquity also remained relevant, postulating that man and the world were structured in an identical way: the so-called overlapping of the micro- and macro-cosmos. In the words of Leonid Chekin, from the 12th century onwards, “these themes merged together to form a new image of the inhabited world as the body of Christ”, which became the conceptual base of some maps.²⁴⁴ The 12th-century map from Aix-en-Provence (*Aix-en-Provence, Bibliothèque Méjanes, 25 (914), f. 293*) locates Paradise next to the World Ocean,²⁴⁵ which is depicted in the form of a circle seemingly enclosing the whole world, and before India, after which, moving inwards toward the center, are depicted the ancient Asian regions/states of Arachosia, Parthia, Asyria, etc.²⁴⁶ Here, the earthly Paradise is represented by a special cross and is positioned near the inscription “East”. The same localization of Paradise—in Asia and preceding India, which is followed by Parthia, Assyria, etc.—can also be found in another map from the Bodleian Library in Oxford, but dating from the 11th century, *Oxford, Bodleian Lib., Canon. Misc. 560, f. 3*.²⁴⁷ In the 11th-century map from Rostock, Germany (*Rostock, Universitätsbibliothek, Codex Philo, 27 sin., f. iv.*), Paradise is again situated in Asia, but this time it lies next to the city of Troy.²⁴⁸

The placement of Paradise in the East, with Adam, Eve and the serpent depicted next to it, can be found in another group of maps, which have a direct connection to the subject matter of the *Apocalypse*. These maps are of the so-called Beatus tradition, stemming from the aforementioned Beatus of Liébana and his work, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin (Commentary on the Apocalypse)*, which was written between 776 and 786. The *Commentary* was quite popular during the Middle Ages in Western Europe, and many of the preserved versions of it (dating from the 10th century onwards) also contain maps that illustrate the prologue of Book II.²⁴⁹

Another type of maps gained popularity in the 13th century (*Bod. 527, f. 189v.*—the Bodleian Library, Oxford; *Paris, BN, Latin 8352, f. 100v.*—the National Library in Paris) that were directly associated with the so-called

244 Chekin 1999, 17 and esp. x.9.2, the so-called second Psalter map and x.11, the Ebstorf map.

245 See here, Ill. 5.

246 Chekin 1999, 63, III.2.4, III 15.

247 Chekin 1999, 57, III.1.3, Ill. 12.

248 Chekin 1999, 35, II.3.

249 For a detailed commentary, see Chekin 1999, 158–167.

Poem of Alexander [the Great],²⁵⁰ a topic which will be explored in detail in the next couple of chapters, since it strongly affects various issues regarding (the expectations for) the *End of the world*.

And now, after this brief foray into the evolution of the western European cartography that aimed to illustrate the general state of geographical knowledge in the Christian West prior to 1200, as well as to show some of the symbolic aspects of the cartography, let us again turn our attention to the aforementioned kingdom of Prester John. The West learned about it thanks to the Crusades, since before them the knowledge of the West European people only extended to where the Helleno-Roman geographical tradition had left it: beyond the River Don (Tanais) was the 'dark Asia', in the outermost edges of which to the north and east lived various creatures worthy to be at the *end* of the human habitable world: antipodes, hippopodes, gryphons, various semi-human semi-animals, cannibals, etc. Traditionally, these expanses in the East were associated with the actual penetration there after the 5th century by Christian (Nestorian) missions,²⁵¹ that left behind the memory of a former successful Christian mission for civilizing the native people, located almost at the end of the then known world. After the 8th century, and especially after the 10th–11th centuries, these same people from Central Asia who spoke East-Iranian or Turkic dialects gradually passed from the fold of Christianity under the rule of Islam.

Of course, a recollection of missions to the lands in the vicinity of India has also been preserved in the ecclesiastical tradition. According to the latter, St. Thomas the Apostle did indeed reach India, in order to preach the Word of God. On the basis of these perceptions and texts, as well as the accounts and legends that the Crusaders brought back to Western Europe after 1099, the learned men there created a new legend, that of the fabled kingdom of Prester John who reigned somewhere in the East, in Asia near the earthly Paradise.²⁵² The tale included another element of importance for the Christian minds: that it was there, in this kingdom, that the tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle was kept, guarded by Prester John himself. Through the years, the rumors grew, gaining more and more new details, until a legend emerged (in the form of an anonymous story) that in 1122, the 'patriarch of India' paid a visit to Pope Callistus II (1119–1124). According to the story, the pope was filled with wonder when he learned that one of the four rivers of Paradise passed through the kingdom of John: it was the biblical River Pishon, along which lived zealous Christians.

250 Chekin 1999, 49, 51, esp. II.10.2, II.11, II.12.

251 See in detail Stepanov 2005, as well as Stepanov 2010, with the cited literature.

252 Delumeau 1992, 100.

The church dedicated to St. Thomas, as the legend went, was situated on a hill, surrounded by a lake, but was accessible only during sixteen days in the year—eight days before and eight after the feast of the apostle. As Jean Delumeau points out, however, this legend is also in part based on facts: according to Abbot Odo of Saint-Remy's Monastery in Rheims, in 1122, an "archbishop from India" did indeed visit Rome, together with a Byzantine delegation.²⁵³

The emergence of such legends also had other, purely psychological grounds. While it is true that after 1099, Levant became a center for the special merging of the *Latin* and the *Arabic* and, accordingly, the *Christian* with the *Islamic*,²⁵⁴ that did not prevent the Christians and the knights who settled there to feel a constant insecurity due to the aggressive Islamic world that surrounded them. They relied not only on the West, but also on the Christian rulers in the nearby Georgia and Armenia, as well as on the more distant 'Asia', where Prester John ruled. It was in such an atmosphere of insecurity and 'salvational expectation' that the legend of the kingdom of Prester John came to be.²⁵⁵

Today, we also know how exactly these rumors and legends managed to reach imperial Europe in the 1140s and merge with some of the more distinct than the then-prevailing perceptions of the coming *End*. In 1141, the ruler of Persia, Sanjar, was defeated by the Qara Khitans (Qara Khitai) who established their own state in Asia, after being ousted from the northern borders of China. Sanjar was regarded as the ruler of the Muslims of Syria and Mesopotamia and, as can be expected, was well known to the local Christian bishops. Thus, in 1145, a version of this event was heard in Viterbo by Otto of Freising, half brother to the emperor at that time, Conrad III (1138–1152), as told by Hugo of Gabala (the city of Byblos in Frankish Syria). In short, it has the following structural parts: somewhere in the East, "some person by the name of John", a Nestorian who ruled as both priest and king and was a descendant of the Magi, was determined to come to the aid of the church of Jerusalem. He conquered the Persians and the Medes and captured Ecbatana, but reached as far as the eastern banks of the Tigris River.²⁵⁶ It was here that the title and appellation of Prester John appeared for the first time.²⁵⁷ We should, however, also keep in mind the long-known fact that this legend was based on information that stemmed not so much from the 'eastern axis', but from the 'southern' one, with regard to the position of Europe itself: the legend actually first appeared as a story about the Ethiopian kingdom, before it began to refer to the so-called

253 Delumeau 1992, 100.

254 Among the immense literature on this issue, see Nikolov 2006, as well as Lambev 2010.

255 Delumeau 1992, 101.

256 Otto von Freising. XXXIII, 266.

257 Delumeau 1992, 101–102.

eastern (Indian) 'Ethiopians', called so because of the dark color of their skin. Also worth noting is that regions called "Ethiopia" (or "Cush") in ancient times could also be found in present-day Northern Iraq, as well as in South Arabia and near the Red Sea,²⁵⁸ and during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages—in the western parts of the Caucasus Mountains, in the so-called inner regions of Colchis.²⁵⁹ The Colchis 'link' is actually based on the well-known 'tradition of the St. Andrew the Apostle', i.e. on the geographic outlining of St. Andrew's mission in the northern and eastern parts of the Black Sea Region.²⁶⁰ In this case, however, it is more important to note that the version from the 1140s in particular was the result of the merging of two separate sources of information, a Nestorian one and a Ethiopian one.²⁶¹ This information was maintained and further supplemented also thanks to the close relations between the churches of Ethiopia and Palestine, which remained even after Jerusalem was conquered by Saladin (an ethnic Kurd) in 1189.²⁶²

The times of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (1155–1190; as king of Germany 1152–1155)²⁶³ were, as it seems, most suitable for the appearance of the so-called four letters of Prester John. Suitable, because this emperor stood at the head of the Third Crusade, namely after Saladin captured the sacred center of the Promised Land, Jerusalem.²⁶⁴ According to Jacqueline Pirenne, the author of these letters was in all likelihood a person (presumably an educated Jew) with connections and acquaintances in the Orient; he addressed the letters to the four most significant for the mid-12th century rulers of Christian Europe: the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180), Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the French king and the Pope.²⁶⁵ The four letters were written in different languages and, what is even more important, differed in content as well, which begs the conclusion that they were adapted to the expectations of the various recipients.²⁶⁶ In contrast to the other three versions, the Latin one, addressed to the archbishop of Mainz, Christian (who was sent in 1170

258 Stepanov 1999, 22–23.

259 Khrushkova 2002, 57 and n. 44.

260 See Dvornik 1958; Vinogradov 1999, 348–368.

261 For further details, see Pirenne 1992, 31–46.

262 Delumeau 1992, 103.

263 His coronation as emperor took place in 1155, at the cathedral with a name that was most significant for the 10th–11th centuries: St. Michael the Archangel (San Michele Maggiore), in the former capital of the Longobardian kingdom, Pavia. A number of other rulers had also been crowned in the same church earlier (Berengar I, Berengar II, Adalbert and others). Even in the Early Middle Ages, St. Michael was considered the patron of the Longobards.

264 For a detailed discussion of the letters, see Pirenne 1992, 65–86; Delumeau 1992, 103–104.

265 Pirenne 1992, 65, 66.

266 Delumeau 1992, 104.

to Constantinople), became rather popular (at least 93 copies of it were found by the second half of the 19th century). This resulted in its continuous influence on people's way of thinking in Western Europe at the time, especially from the beginning of the 13th century onwards.²⁶⁷ With regard to our topic, however, the most significant accounts in these and the following texts based on the aforementioned legends are all connected to subject matter that shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter. This is why I will only outline them briefly here.

And so, disregarding all imaginings and inaccuracies permeating such legends and stories that were spread across the ends of the medieval Christian world, let us instead note that they also contained various important *topoi*, related to the matter of the *End* of the world (both in the literal and figurative sense of the word). Also of importance here are the structural elements, often repeated in such texts ('the chosen kingdom', the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog', the Tree of Life, the *abundance* cliché; the earthly Paradise, the sacred source, "filled with God's mercy and the Holy Spirit"; the absence of rogues, voluptuaries and liars, etc.).

The cartographers of the 12th-century, which were acquainted with 'the peoples of Gog and Magog' cliché, positioned the latter north of Asia, across from the "land of the Amazons" (for example, in the 12th-century treatise *Descriptio mappe mundi*, by Hugh of Saint Victor), but did not yet mark the so-called kingdom of Prester John on the maps.²⁶⁸ Later, however, these same 'unclean peoples' would become an integral part of the story of this kingdom, and their habitats, either insular or continental, would turn into some kind of its contradiction. As Jean Delumeau points out, "in the most general sense, the geography of Asia, as it was understood by westerners from the 12th–14th centuries, usually positioned the Islamic world beyond the Christian one, and beyond that (the world of Islam—*Author's note*) and rather vaguely, the land of the Amazons, followed by the land of Gog and Magog, the kingdom of Prester John and, finally, very distantly and on a high mountaintop—the earthly Paradise".²⁶⁹ This is yet another illustration of the old adage that the medieval man was fascinated by *remote-ness*—how else would we explain his wish to position this kingdom so far away in the East, right before the Earthly Paradise.²⁷⁰

267 Delumeau 1992, 103–105.

268 Delumeau 1992, 119.

269 Delumeau 1992, 120.

270 On the image of the earthly Paradise in the medieval theological writings, see also Alekseev 2000, 48–60.

1.3 Expectations for the *End of Times* in Byzantium

First of all, let us note that the year 1000 was not, in fact, the thousandth year according to the Byzantine calendar, but the year 6508 from the creation of the world (*anno mundi*). It is therefore no coincidence that the Byzantines placed the birth of Jesus in the year 5500 from the creation of the world (this computational model was established in the Roman Empire as early as the 2nd–3rd century), and thus saw as symbolic the years 6000, 6500 and especially 7000, the latter corresponding to the year 1492 according to our modern Christian calendar.²⁷¹ Also worth recalling is the well-known fact that all Byzantine Paschal calculations do not go beyond 7000 years from the creation of the world and they sometimes end with direct references to the impending *End of the world*.²⁷²

Early on, the Byzantines began to regard the millennia of human history as days in a cosmic week, corresponding to the days of creation, which naturally built on the emblematic vision from the Psalms and the New Testament (Ps. 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8), i.e. the well-known notion of a thousand years being but a day in the eyes of God. Again not incidentally, the Byzantines, and especially the Rus', viewed the final year (1492, the end of the 'seventh millennium') as the *End of the world*, which is reflected in numerous accounts from the mid-15th century onwards.²⁷³

In Russia, in particular, the work of Kirik the Novgorodian, "Teaching on Numbers" (*Uchenie, im zhe vedati cheloveku chisla vsekh let*, dated 1136), has been given a prominent place in many calendric mathematical texts, found in various parts of 'Slavia Orthodoxa'. While various compilations from the Russian lands contain numerous calendric mathematical texts from the 15th–17th centuries, which to a certain extent are similar to the above-mentioned work of Kirik the Novgorodian, this does not mean that they have stemmed from it.²⁷⁴ Following the above-said regarding the anticipation of the *End* in 1492, it is hardly surprising that the number of such texts began to rise precisely from the 15th century onwards, although some of them have been written even earlier. According to Anatolii Turilov, the presence of traces of the Glagolitic script in this sort of texts in Russia suggests that their origin is much older, probably before the first half of the 11th century, since the type of Glagolitic

271 For a detailed overview of the so-called seven-thousand-year calculations, see Simonov 1975, 109–112; Turilov 1988, 27–38.

272 Alekseev 2002, 54 and n. 70.

273 For additional details, including a commentary on the earlier literature, see Magdalino 2003, 236–238; Magdalino 2008, 125–129.

274 Turilov 1988, 27, 34.

used in them (the round type) passed out of use in the 12th century. Due to these reasons Turilov is inclined to associate the initial emergence of such written documents (the seven-thousand-year calculation type) with the period between the final third of the 9th and the first half of the 11th century. Their topographical origin, in his opinion, should be sought either in the lands of Great Moravia, or those of the Danube Bulgarians, since the seven-thousand-year calculations were directly related to the Byzantine cultural tradition. Secondly, the same author directly states that “apparently, the monument from Bulgaria reached Rus’ in the 11th century”.²⁷⁵ These observations and conclusions of Anatolii Turilov are undoubtedly directly related to the analysis that is to follow in the present study.

In the opinion of Paul Magdalino, the mid-10th century was the period in Byzantine history that proved to be perfectly in harmony with the imperial political course of Byzantium and its representations (i.e. with the Byzantine imperial ideology), coinciding also with the first Christian millennium.²⁷⁶ Another thing worth noting is the increased number of various horoscopes that cropped up in Byzantium at the end of the 10th century, as well as the general interest in prophecies there²⁷⁷—a specific and quite interesting trait of the reign of Emperor Basil II (976–1025) in particular. In view of this, I would like to briefly note that in the West, the end of the same century was marked by a real ‘computistical fever’ in the monastic culture and by an ‘obsession’ with the idea of time and its calculation,²⁷⁸ which most probably was related to none other than years like 1000 or 1033.²⁷⁹ These similarities between the two centers of Christianity in Europe during the same time period and regarding the same issues can hardly be seen as mere coincidence, in spite of all the existing differences in the details.²⁸⁰

After the peak of apocalyptic expectations during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I (491–518), i.e. on the threshold between the 5th and the 6th century, the Byzantines fell into yet another apocalyptic ‘trance’ in the mid-10th century. Even the number of preserved texts from this period in Byzantium is higher than the texts from Western Europe. At least eight such texts predict the *End of the world* in the middle of the seventh millennium, with three of them directly pointing to the year 6500, two—the middle of the millennium (without giving any further specifics), three explicitly name

275 Turilov 1988, 37–38.

276 Magdalino 2003, 238, 254.

277 Magdalino 2008, 128–129.

278 Guenée 1980, 152.

279 Landes 2000, 120.

280 Magdalino 2008, 129.

the thousandth anniversary of Christ's Resurrection as the end date, and one states that the birth of Antichrist shall occur in the one-thousandth year from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is particularly important to note that the authors of three of those texts are not anonymous, but highly educated people: Theophanios the Monk, Niketas the Paphlagonian, and Anthimos, *chartophylax* of the Church of Constantinople.²⁸¹ They are only the 'tip of the iceberg', since the existence of such sentiments can also be indirectly verified by a number of other sources, including Leo the Deacon, John the Geometer, the satirical dialogue *Philopatris*, or Liutprand of Cremona and his *Legatio*, i.e. account (report) on his mission to Constantinople in 968. The last two sources are from the time of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969), when the Byzantine capital experienced an increase in prophetic speculations regarding the *End of the world*. If we further add the various 'visions' that also deal with the impending *End*, such as the one by Cosmas the Monk (written in 934); or the *Vitae*, including the ones of St. Niphon, St. Basil the Younger, or St. Andrew of Constantinople (Andrew the Fool); or the *Apocalypse* of Anastasia, dated to the end of Emperor John Tzimiskes' lifetime (969–976), somewhere around 976 or a bit later, we would get a picture of anxious anticipation of the *End of the world*, that had obviously also taken hold of certain educated circles in Byzantium in the second half of the 10th century.²⁸² Liutprand, for instance, asserted that the prophecies of Daniel were taken very seriously by the Byzantines, adding at the same time that, according to the prediction of (Pseudo-)Hippolytus, it would be the Franks and not the Byzantines who would be destined to defeat the Saracens at the *End of Times*.²⁸³

All of these *Vitae*, as well as the one of St. Anthony by St. Athanasius of Alexandria (and several apocryphal ones, found in the East, like *Vision of St. Paul*, *Descent of the Virgin into Hell* and others) also deal with the important issue of the ordeals of the soul, touching on the idea of the individual Judgment at the moment of a person's death. The above-mentioned *Vitae* and apocrypha are actually part of the teachings of the Orthodox Church about *Judicium Dei*, the divine Judgment. Of particular significance for us is the same topic as illustrated in *Vita of St. Basil the Younger*, where the ordeals of the soul are brought to 20 in number (or 22, in some versions), with their end being given next to ... the impressive depiction of the Last Judgment. It is clear that this *Vita* goes beyond the narrow constraints of the regular work of the hagiographic genre

281 Magdalino 2003, 241; Magdalino 2008, 128.

282 For more on them, see Magdalino 2003, 241–245; on Liutprand viewed through the apocalyptic prism, in particular, see Brandes 2000, 435–463.

283 Magdalino 2005, 45–46.

and is thus similar to other such *Vitae*, like those of St. John the Merciful and Niphon of Constantia.²⁸⁴

1.3.1 *The 'Scythian' Threat from the North before 1092*

1.3.1.1 Signs, Horoscopes and the Attacks of the Rus'

Byzantium was well aware of the Rus' invasion in Bulgaria in 968–970: after all, it was the Byzantine court that put this attack into motion, after almost 40 years (927–966) of peace between the Bulgarians and the Byzantines.²⁸⁵ The Rus' themselves, apart from the cliché *Ros/Rosh*, were also known to the Byzantines as *Tauroscythians*.

The troops of Prince Sviatoslav of Kiev even reached the outskirts of Constantinople, after capturing Plovdiv (Philippopolis) and its surroundings. As a result, in the spring and summer of 971 Basileus John Tzimiskes (969–976) was forced to personally lead a great Byzantine army northwards, against Sviatoslav's troops who by then controlled large parts of Eastern Bulgaria, in an attempt to drive them out of Southeastern Europe.²⁸⁶ Tzimiskes ended this campaign in success that proved to be even larger than he or those close to him had expected. Not only did large parts of the Bulgarian Tsardom end up in Byzantine hands, along with the capital Preslav, but one of the captured was the Bulgarian tsar Boris II (970–971) himself.

Later, the Byzantines were also very much aware that the Rus', this time under the command of Prince Vladimir († 1015), had captured the Byzantine city of Cherson, strategic for the control of the steppes north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, in 988 (or the spring of 989?). This occurred at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Basil II (976–1025) who is of great importance for our study.²⁸⁷ At this point, the Rus' were still pagans. And, as was stated above, the connection between the 'Rus/Ros' people and the apocalyptic *Rosh* from the Holy Scripture (Ez. 38:2–3, 39:1) was too easily visible to be ignored by the Byzantines, as was the paganism of the Rus', and the direction from which they had attacked the 'chosen people' of Byzantium—the emblematic north, well-known from the legends about the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog' and Alexander the Great, as well as from the Old and New Testament notions of the *End of Times*.²⁸⁸ Let us add another, quite significant for us, fact: the negotiations regarding the return of Cherson to the Byzantines and Basil II,

284 Alekseev 2002, 53 and n. 66.

285 For more details, see *Istoriia na Bulgariia* 1999/1, 296–298.

286 For more details, see, for instance, *Istoriia na Bulgariia* 1999/1, 298–300; Franklin, Shepard 1996, 148–150.

287 Franklin, Shepard 1996, 161–163.

288 Magdalino 2005, 47.

in particular, proved to be decisive for the outcome of the dispute about the center where Prince Vladimir and his nobles would finally agree to adopt one of the monotheistic religions, i.e. Christianity, from Constantinople.

Something else to recall is the great interest in astrology, in particular, and in the creation of horoscopes that existed during the rule of Basil II (976–1025), which, interestingly enough, lasted from the very end of the 10th century (the 'special' year 992) until 1025 (this year was also deemed 'special', since it was conventional for the millennium from the birth of Christ—*anno mundi* 6333).²⁸⁹ Paul Magdalino, for one, is certain that there is a direct connection between the *Menology* (the *Synaxarion*, to be more precise) and the *Psalter* from the times of Basil II, on one hand, and the expected *End of the world*, on the other. This connection can undoubtedly be found against the backdrop of a symbolically unified series of illuminations, where the basileus is depicted alongside the saints. Their cult in Byzantium, as is well known, "was central to Byzantine religious Orthodoxy".²⁹⁰ It is no less central also with regard to the Second Coming of Christ and Judgment Day, as can be seen in St. John's *Revelation*. Viewed through the prism of the Byzantine mentality, any commentary on this parallelism seems unnecessary.

Another interesting text can be mentioned here with regard to the year 1025: it tells of a prepared horoscope about the fall of Constantinople under foreign rule, which was predicted to occur in *anno mundi* 6534, i.e. c. 1025/1026. And, according to the well-established view, the destruction of the capital Constantinople—"the eye of the Universe", "the center of the world"—could not occur long before the *End of Times*; it was even expected to precede it by only a few years. Although anonymous, this text was copied by George Kedrenos and, what is more important, it placed the prophecy on the same plane with the so-called 'horoscope of Valens', as well as with certain 'signs' of the impending *End*, found in several 10th-century works, including the writings of Leo the Deacon. Among them were the heavy defeats of Basil II by the Bulgarians in the 980s, and especially the one in 986, the above-mentioned capture of Cherson by Vladimir's troops (988 or 989) and the Bulgarian capture of Berroia (the summer of 989). In addition, the fall of the dome of one of the capital's symbols, Hagia Sophia, due to an earthquake (986), and the observed comet and "pillars of fire" in the sky.²⁹¹ And, to conclude the topic of the 'signs' and the interest in horoscopes that marked the reign of Basil II, I would like to

289 For more details, see Magdalino 2003, 257–259 and esp. 259.

290 Magdalino 2003, 251.

291 See Lev Diakon 1988, 90–91 and n. 68, 69, 70, 71 [=x.10]; Magdalino 2003, 259–261; see also Magdalino 2008, 129.

draw attention to the remarkably high number of horoscopes that appeared from the 970s onwards. They date from 977, 984, 989, 1002, 1003, 1006, 1007, 1009 and 1011.²⁹² This conjunction of stars and saints alongside horoscopes is among the most curious characteristics of the times of Basil II. In the words of Paul Magdalino, it was without precedent and would never occur again.²⁹³

But let us turn back to the Rus'. In truth, after their conversion to Christianity in 988/989, and that with the help and personal participation from the same emperor Basil II, the Rus' began to be viewed not as an 'unclean' people, but as a very distant one, which could hardly aid the Byzantines with anything, including the containment of the detested nomads along the Danube River. Perhaps also for this reason, the neglect shown towards the Rus' merchants in Constantinople led to the outbreak of the Byzantine-Rus'ian war of 1043, a conflict that remained forgotten for a long time after the 980s. The Byzantines in particular enjoyed the benevolence of the Rus'ian merchants to obtain valuable furs from the North, and were also able to count on the help of a large Rus'ian military corps, sent by order of Prince Vladimir the Great to Constantinople, which by the end of the 10th century exceeded 6000 men.²⁹⁴

1.3.1.2 The Pechenegs and the Other Steppe Nomads

One of the so-called barbarian peoples from the North that in truth harassed not only the Bulgarians, but also the Byzantines (only in theory at first, but later also in reality, especially after conquering the Bulgarian tsardom in 1018 and following the 1030s and 1040s, in particular) were the Pechenegs: yet another nomadic ethnic group located to the north-northwest of the Black Sea. Though they often acted in unison with their kindred tribe, the Turkic-speaking Uzes, in Byzantine memory the Pechenegs became the one factor that left the most lasting impression, as shall be seen below. Something similar also afflicted the 'Bulgarian' collective memory (for details, see below, Chapter 3), which placed the Pechenegs next to the Magyars/Hungarians and viewed them in *End of Times*-clichés like the well-known 'Gog and Magog' and/or 'Ishmaelites'. It appeared that both the Magyars and the Pechenegs, although not practicing the same religion after 1000, were 'cast' in the role of the invaders in the 'new' Promised Land, Byzantium. Often, the 'barbarians' would act in conjunction,²⁹⁵

292 Magdalino 2003, 261.

293 Magdalino 2003, 263.

294 See Skylitzes 1973, 430, Michael Attaleiates 2012, 33–35 [=5, 3–4], as well as Joannis Zonarae 1897, 631–632 [=XVII, 24]; Franklin and Shepard 1996, 216; Shepard 2011c, 58 [=VIII, 58]; for detailed information on the Rus'-Byzantine trade contacts, see Simeonova 2012, 30–53.

295 On the Hungarian-Pecheneg factor in Byzantine politics in the 11th century, see Shepard 2011c, 55–83 [=No. VIII].

which is probably one of the reasons for the coupling of their images, especially in the apocalyptic literature from the 11th–12th centuries. This, of course, was also aided by the Byzantine knowledge of these 'northern barbarians' in the 10th–11th centuries: the Magyar domination of the Black Sea region steppes (north of the Black Sea) from the 830s and until the end of the century cannot be denied;²⁹⁶ later, in the 10th and the early 11th centuries, the Pechenegs permanently took their place, in particular to the east of the Danube Delta.²⁹⁷

Gaining knowledge about the Pechenegs proved to be of great importance for the Byzantines: not coincidentally, accounts about these nomadic tribes were left not only by common Byzantine chroniclers from the 10th and 11th centuries, but also by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959) himself, in his work *De Administrando Imperio*.²⁹⁸ All these tribes were grouped under the general term "Turkic-speaking nomads", although the name "Turks" seemed to have become permanently attached mostly to the Magyars. Even the Hungarians themselves, at a later period after the 10th century, also began to refer to themselves as 'Turks', and their state as *Tourkia*. The depredations of the Magyars and Pechenegs (together with the Uzes and other nomads from the East) after the 11th century were mostly concentrated in the former northern and northwestern dominions of the Bulgarian tsardom, since after its fall in 1018, these lands essentially became a boundary zone for the Byzantine Empire.²⁹⁹

Jonathan Shepard draws special attention to the fact that after the Byzantines conquered Bulgaria in 1018, it was the Magyars who had the potential to become a power which could stop attacks on Byzantium from the steppes, and at the same time be a deterrent against the possible rise of the Bulgarians.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, we should not underestimate the possibility that some high-ranking Bulgarian nobles chose to take refuge among the Hungarians. The case of the leader of the first major Bulgarian uprising from 1040–1041, Petur Delian, could be sufficient to make such an assertion a valid one. Furthermore, in 1060/1061 in Hungary (present-day Michalovce) died 'Prince

296 Shepard 2011, 98–99 [=Nr. VII, 98–99].

297 On the Pecheneg factor in Bulgarian history, see Bozhilov 1973, 37–62, and for a more general overview of the Turkic-speaking (late nomadic) factor in it during the 11th–12th centuries, see Täpkova-Zaimova 1976; Täpkova-Zaimova 1979, 193–201, esp. 193–198; Täpkova-Zaimova 1980, 331–339; for denotations about the 'Scythians', 'Pechenegs', 'Cumans' from the 11th–12th centuries, see Moravcsik 1958/II, 167–168, 247–248, 279–281.

298 See Const. Porph. *De adm. imp.* 1967, Ch. 40.

299 For further details, see Täpkova-Zaimova 1976; Rashev 1983, 242–253; Atanasov 1991, 78–82; Dimitrov 1998; Stephenson 2000a; also see Simeonova 2014, 371–378.

300 For more details, see Shepard 2011c, 58–60. [= No. VIII, 58–60].

Prusian' (Presian/Persian), a rather high-ranking Bulgarian and the direct descendant of the Bulgarian royal family, and Tsar Ioan Vladislav (1015–1018) in particular.³⁰¹ Despite the presence of a Byzantine Orthodox metropolitan in the eastern and southeastern parts of the Hungarian kingdom during the first half of the 11th century, and of Magyar troops fighting on the Byzantine side in the Apennines in 1053–1054, such occurrences cannot be viewed as evidence of any firmly established principles of political and military support lent by the Magyars to Byzantium.³⁰²

It was presumed that sometime between 1046 and 1050, the basileus Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055) had sent the famous 'Monomachos Crown' to the Hungarian king András/Andrew I (1046/1047–1060), and this act was interpreted as a sign of direct diplomatic contacts between the two ruling dynasties.³⁰³ In recent decades, however, this assumption has been at least partially weakened, after the late Nikolaos Oikonomides unambiguously proved that a number of the enameled plates on this crown showed some deviations from the 'high art' of the Constantinople court. Oikonomides has also drawn attention to the fact that in some places, there are spelling mistakes on the enamel, as well as issues with the adequate inscription of the titles with regard to the Byzantine originals, and their accuracy regarding the time period in question, the 11th century. Such problems with the spelling would hardly have arisen in the court workshops of Constantinople.³⁰⁴ Thus, whether or not the crown was indeed a gift from Byzantium to the Magyar king (from the 11th century, as Josef Deér thinks),³⁰⁵ or was part of the plunder spoils that fell into the hands of the crusaders after the fall of Constantinople in the spring of 1204, as Nikolaos Oikonomides assumes,³⁰⁶ is a question that remains open for the moment. For this reason, it cannot be used as definite proof of the existence of friendly relations between the two states in the mid-11th century. What is known for certain, however, is that tensions broke out between them around 1059, forcing the basileus Isaac I Komnenos (1057–1059) to confirm the peace with treaties. This happened somewhere near Sofia (Serдика), as Michael Attaleiates points out, explicitly stating that the Byzantine armies "terrified the

301 Skylitzes 1973, 376, 384; Zonarae 1897, 574 [=XVII.11]; for more details on Presian/Prouisian, see Cheynet 1990, 39–42; Iordanov 1997, 75–101; Pavlov 1993; Pavlov 1999.

302 Shepard 2011c, 60–61 and n. 18 [=Nr. VIII, 60–61, and n. 18].

303 The amount of literature dedicated to this crown is considerable—see, for instance Deér 1966.

304 Oikonomides 1994, 241–262, esp. 246–252, 254–255, 262; see also Shepard 2011c, 62 [=Nr. VIII, 62].

305 Deér 1966, 140.

306 Oikonomides 1994, 254.

Sauromatae", i.e. the Magyars, who were forced "to make an alliance (pact) with him".³⁰⁷ Could this mean that up until then no such treaties had been signed with the Hungarians? As a counterpoint to this situation, Jonathan Shepard specifically notes the fact that in 1053, the Byzantines signed a 30-year peace treaty with the Pechenegs.³⁰⁸

The position of the Hungarian king András/Andrew I, namely, his association with papal Rome as well as with the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, would hardly allow for any closer ties with the Byzantine basileus of the 'clientelistic' type, since the latter could not be placed in any way or in any form together with these two Western powers,³⁰⁹ and especially after 1054 and the so-called Great Schism.

Despite the animosity that ensued between the East and the West after the Schism, from the 1060s onwards the contacts between the ruling circles and also individual notables from Hungary and Byzantium seemed to increase. Worth mentioning among these is Romanos Diogenes, who in the mid-1060s became known to the *Sauromatae* [the Hungarians] while "he was the governor [*archon*] of the cities along the Ister [Danube]".³¹⁰ In 1067, Diogenes was the *dux* of Sofia and, in his attempts to seize the throne, he tried to begin negotiations with some Magyar notables.³¹¹ Several years later (1071), the Magyars themselves were attacked by the Pechenegs, for which they blamed the Byzantines—for having let the Pecheneg hordes cross the Sava River and plunder many of the settlements near Belgrade, before withdrawing beyond the Danube with huge spoils. In response to these actions by the Byzantines, the Hungarian king Salomon (1063–1074), together with his two top military commanders (*duces*), Ladislaus/Ladislás and Géza, subjected Belgrade to a two-month-long siege, before finally capturing it. A little later, the king and Géza also succeeded in capturing the city of Niš, from which they took not only gold, silver and precious clothes, but also the arm of Saint Procopius of Scythopolis, which they all took to Sirmium.³¹² Khristo Dimitrov is inclined to agree with the opinion of some researchers that the war between the Byzantines and the

307 For a detailed commentary on the conflicts, see Michael Attaleiates 2012, 120–121 [=12.13].

308 Shepard 2011c, 63 [=No. VIII, 63]; for sources on the protracted Byzantine-Pecheneg war that lasted from 1047 to 1053 and ended with the 30-year treaty of 1053, see Michael Attaleiates 2012, 52–77 and esp. 74–77 [=ch. 7, esp. 7.17], as well as Skylitzes 1973, 476; see also Diaconu 1970, 75–76; Malamut 1995, 127–128.

309 Shepard 2011c, 64–65 [=Nr. VIII, 64–65].

310 Michael Attaleiates 2012, 178–179 [16.8]; Shepard 2011c, 66 [=Nr. VIII, 66].

311 Michael Attaleiates 2012, 176–179 [=16.8].

312 On the disputes regarding the dating of these events: whether they took place c. 1064, 1068, 1071 or 1072/1073, see Dimitrov 1998, 95–96; see also Shepard 2011c, 67, 69 [=No. VIII, 67, 69].

Magyars lasted between 1072 and 1073 and could have had something to do with the second big uprising of the Bulgarians that broke out at that time and was led by Georgi Voitekh and Constantine Bodin (Peter III). The war also resulted in the separation of the Srem region from the Byzantine Empire and its accession to Hungary.³¹³ It is thus evident that between the 1050s and the 1080s, the Magyars were noted for their numerous attacks on the northwestern lands of Byzantium, which at that time were populated mainly by Bulgarians, including the regions surrounding Srem, Belgrade, Niš, Vidin and probably also Sredets/Sofia.³¹⁴ Perhaps it was this fact that prompted a number of unknown Bulgarian writers from the late 11th and the following 12th century—for the second time after the Magyar invasions across the Danube from the end of 9th and the 10th centuries—to leave a record of their invasions through the prism of historical apocalypticism. The aforementioned aspects of the issues surrounding the expectation of the *End of the world* will be further discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 of this book, also with an added clarification of a number of important details regarding the use of various kinds of *topoi*.

The image of the Pechenegs in the times of the first emperors of the Komnenos dynasty³¹⁵ is of special significance for us, since they came from the ‘Scythian space’ beyond the Danube and could easily be recognized in the cliché, ‘wicked peoples of Gog and Magog’. The so-called Scythian war of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), which lasted from 1086 to 1091,³¹⁶ has been described by a number of Byzantine writers, including Joannes Zonaras, Anna Komnene and Archbishop Theophylaktos of Okhrid. As ascertained, they have all used the well-known to the Byzantines rhetorical techniques of stigmatization of the ‘outsiders’ and especially the ‘enemy nomads’. This war is important for at least two reasons: 1) because it was waged right before the *End of the world*, expected to occur around 1092; and 2) because of the fact that the Pechenegs invaded through the Danube, the boundary of the Roman-Christian civilization

313 Dimitrov 1998, 96; the same viewpoint is also shared by Shepard 2011c, 70 and n. 48 [=No. VIII, 70 и n. 48]; on the rather ambiguous relations between the former king Salomon and the Byzantines in 1087, when the dethroned Salomon attempted to enter the lands of the Empire inhabited mainly by Bulgarians but was driven away by the basileus, see Dimitrov 1998, 96–97, as well as Shepard 2011c, 68 [=No. VIII, 68].

314 Cf., however, “the Byzantine viewpoint” in Shepard 2011c, 71 [=No. VIII, 71], who talks about the “essentially peaceful relations between Byzantine emperors and Hungarian leaders from c. 1060 up to the time of the First Crusade”.

315 For more details, see Kozlov 2013, 145–161, as well as Malamut 1995, 134–142; for a general overview of the Pechenegs and their alliances with or attacks on the Bulgarians and the Byzantines in the 10th–11th centuries, see also Kniaz’kii 2003, 10–66.

316 Among the latest titles on this topic see, for instance, Stephenson 2000a, 100–103; Curta 2006, 300–302; Spinei 2009, 119–121.

and the 'chosen people' of Byzantium. Not surprisingly, the Pechenegs were inserted into the cliché of the 'Scythians', i.e. barbarians who are never content in times of peace and feel good only when at war; in addition, they were innumerable, surpassing in numbers even the bees, and their forays could only be compared to lightning strikes, if we are to believe the image depicted by Theophylaktos of Okhrid in his speech addressed to Alexios I Komnenos.³¹⁷ Such rhetoric is consistent with the age-old 'rules' of describing the barbarians in ancient Rome and Greece, and especially in their successor, the Christian Roman Empire. One should, however, also keep in mind that the Pechenegs became a very serious adversary of the Byzantine state only after they had crossed the frozen Danube into the lands of conquered Bulgaria in the winter of 1046/1047 (led by Tyrach), thus achieving their first massive and truly threatening invasion into the Byzantine territories.

The Pecheneg attacks from the mid-11th century south of the Danube have also been mentioned by Michael Psellos in his *Chronographia*.³¹⁸ Being extremely erudite in ancient knowledge and wont to using its clichés, he preferred to call the Pechenegs, along with all the other 'barbarians' that were enemies of the Byzantine Empire, with archaic names. Thus, in his writings, the Uzes became *Getae*, the Seljuk Turks—Parthians, and the Bulgarians and often also the Pechenegs who settled in some parts of present-day North Bulgaria, were called *Moesi/Moesians*. Psellos also talks of *Triballi*, as well as of *Tauroscythians*. The latter clearly substitute at times the name of the actual Rus' mercenaries in the Byzantine armies since the 10th century.³¹⁹ In short, this author's style is heavily influenced by the Antiquity and is inherent of the typical Byzantine highly-educated polyhistorian encyclopedists. Psellos did not use the definition 'peoples (of) Gog and Magog', which was probably due to his 'antique' style and rhetorical techniques, as well as the type of book he was writing—*Chronographia*, a chronography.

Being a high-ranked official at the court of a number of Byzantine emperors (and even Augusta Eudokia) and thus involved in real politics during several decades of the 11th century, Psellos was distant from both the historical apocalyptic 'genre' and the classical visionary tradition, which were the most likely to '(re)produce' the allusions to Gog and Magog. It seems that the same observation is also true for the other high-ranking 'intellectuals'

317 For a detailed analysis, see Kozlov 2013, 147–148; Kozlov 2014, 83–99, esp. 85–91.

318 Psell. *Chron.* VII, 67 (221.28–222.10), ed. Sathas; Mikhail Psel 1999, 259 [=VII, 67], *passim*.

319 For Michael Psellos' direct mention of the Rus' with their original name, see Mikhail Psel 1999, 158–159 [=VI. XC–XCI]; among the numerous available titles on the commercial and other relations between the Byzantines and the Rus' between the 10th and the 11th centuries, see, for instance, Litavrin 1999, 453–465; Simeonova 2006, 152–156.

of the Byzantine state during the 11th–12th centuries, mentioned here, like Anna Komnene, Archbishop Theophylaktos of Okhrid, Michael Attaleiates and others.³²⁰ All of them often used the antique notion of the opposing “Scythians”/barbarians” and *Rhomaioi* (Byzantines), or the even more telling *Ausones* (i.e. Greeks-and-*Rhomaioi*) and “barbarians”/“Scythians”. More specifically, the opposition between the Pechenegs=Scythians and the *Ausones*=*Rhomaioi* (e.g. during the wars of 1047–1053) is typical for the writings of Michael Attaleiates.³²¹ He used the same manner of name archaization also for *Sauromatae*, most probably referring to the Magyars.³²²

Likewise, Anna Komnene, when writing about the Magyars, presented their country as *Dacia*,³²³ either making an allusion to the archaic ethnonym ‘Dacians’ or updating the terminology with the adequate for the Early Middle Ages name for the Magyar kingdom, *Ungria*.³²⁴ Furthermore, she did not use the definition ‘Ishmaelites’, well known from apocalypticism after the early 8th century, in order to ‘disguise’ the Arabs/Saracens or the more adequate for her age latest wave of Muslims attacking Byzantium, the Seljuk Turks.

It would be natural to assume that Archbishop Theophylaktos of Okhrid used the image of the Pechenegs as a counterpoint to that of the basileus, for whom he created his *encomium*, in the well-known style of Deacon Agapetus and other earlier writers who laid the foundations of the Byzantine model of the ‘exemplary ruler’.³²⁵ Theophylaktos of Okhrid was interested in the Pechenegs not so much *per se*, as an actual people, but as a reason to praise the emperor Alexios I Komnenos for his successful attempt to make peace with them without bloodshed. This is why Alexios I Komnenos was called a “peacemaker”, and described as a man of high integrity and prudence that had enabled him to deal with a dangerous and savage adversary who had invaded the lands of the Empire from the north.³²⁶

320 For the specifics of their styles, see Bibikov 1989, 89–128, esp. 114–119; esp. on the appeal of Theophylaktos of Okhrid for tolerance towards the *Other* (meaning the West), see Dimitrov 2014, 113–118.

321 See Michael Attaleiates 2012, 52–55 [=7.1–3], and on the Byzantines as *Ausones*, see 390–391 [27.3]. Attaleiates often talks of the Pechenegs as ‘Scythians’, see Michael Attaleiates 2012, 52–71 [=7.1, 7.3–5, 7.7–8, 7.11, 7.14], *passim*.

322 Michael Attaleiates 2012, 120–121 [12.13] and n. 120, 178–179 [16.8–9] and n. 167.

323 Grutski izvori za bulgarskata istoriia 1972/VIII, 38 [=111.8]—“the rulers of the Dacians”; on the tendency for archaization among the Byzantine intellectuals of the 11th and the early 12th centuries, see also Dimitrov 2014, 49 ff.

324 Grutski izvori za bulgarskata istoriia 1972/VIII, 49 [=v.7], 115 [=x.5]; for a commentary on the use of archaic names by Psellos and Attaleiates, see Tăpkova-Zaimova 1993a, 701–709.

325 On this model, see, for instance, Giuzelev 1985, 19–31; Simeonova 1988, 91–104; Nikolov 1999, 74–88; Nikolov 2000b, 76–105.

326 Magdalino 1993a, 419; Kozlov 2013, 153; see also Kozlov 2014, 85–91.

The main work on the history of the Byzantine-Pecheneg wars from the end of the 11th century, however, was that of Anna Komnene (1083–1153/1155?). Known by the name *Alexiad*,³²⁷ it marks the beginning of a new phase in the development of the Byzantine empire's perceptions of the trans-Danubian Turkic-speaking nomads. Moreover, this account reflects not only the views from the late 11th century, but also largely those from the times of the direct successors of Alexios I: John II Komnenos (1118–1143) and Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180). According to Sergei Kozlov, this period was marked by the emergence of a new ideal of the basileus, that of the 'knight'.³²⁸

In *Alexiad*, Anna Komnene makes a clear distinction between the Turkic-speaking nomads north of the Danube from the 11th–12th centuries, the Pechenegs, and the Cumans, describing the first as enemies of the Byzantines, and the latter—as their allies. As Paul Stephenson³²⁹ estimates, the high-ranking Byzantine noblewoman chose to denote these people more often than not with the broader term 'Scythians' and its derivatives (248 times), preferring it to the specific 'Pechenegs'/*Patzinakoi* (10 times) and, respectively, 'Cumans'/*Komanoi* (81 times). In addition, it should be noted that in books VI–VIII of the *Alexiad*, the term 'Scythians' has almost always been used to denote the Pechenegs, and not once to refer to the Cumans.³³⁰ Kozlov, for one, is certain—in part due to a thorough linguistic analysis—that this specificity of Anna Komnene has its logical justification: she used the term 'Scythians' only for the Pechenegs, because they were the ones perceived as Byzantium's enemies from the north.³³¹ This image survived also after the famous Battle of Levounion in Thrace (24 April 1091), when, as Anna Komnene writes,³³² her father Alexios I Komnenos destroyed the Pechenegs almost in their entirety. It continued to exist also during the last serious clashes with the northern invaders in 1122–1123, during the reign of Alexios' successor, John II Komnenos (1118–1143).³³³ The above-mentioned invaders did not only include the Pechenegs, but also the so-called Turks (the Oghuz) and most likely the so-called *Berendei*, but in Byzantine 'memory', it was the Pechenegs that the

327 See an edition of the text in: Anna Comnina 1965. The literature on Anna Komnene herself, as well as on her use of the terms "Scythians" and "Pechenegs", and the events she describes, including the wars with the Normans and the Seljuk Turks, the First Crusade, etc., is vast. For a general overview, see Herrin 2007, 232–241, and also Dimitrov 2014, 21–29, 51–52.

328 Magdalino 1993a, 419; Kozlov 2013, 154–155.

329 Stephenson 2000a, 108.

330 Kozlov 2013, 155 and n. 27; see also Kozlov 2014, 91–93.

331 Kozlov 2013, 155–156; Kozlov 2014, 91–99.

332 *Aleksyiada* VIII, 5 (248. 6–8).

333 For a detailed reconstruction of these events, see Kniaz'kii 2003, 71–78; see also Curta 2006, 312–314, as well as Spinei 2009, 120–127.

basileus defeated at the Battle of Berroia (also Beroe or Borui, present-day Stara Zagora) in 1122. The Byzantine historian Joannes Kinnamos writes about the pacification of the ‘Scythians’ after this particular defeat.³³⁴ Much later, at the very end of the 12th century (or the threshold between the 12th and the 13th century), another Byzantine author, Niketas Choniates, directly linked the Pechenegs with the victory of John II Komnenos at the Battle of Berroia, praising the emperor for his “glorious victory over the Scythians”. He also ascribed to the basileus another significant act: John II Komnenos dedicated his victory to God and established a special celebration of thanksgiving, which “we (the Byzantines, *Author’s note*) today call the festival of the Pechenegs”.³³⁵ It is obvious that such a name could appear only if the main nomad hordes that had invaded from the north across the Danube and had been subsequently defeated by the Byzantine armies at Berroia, were made up of Pechenegs. Otherwise, the festival could hardly have remained with this name.³³⁶

1.3.2 *The Norman Threat from the West before and after 1092*

The sense of Byzantium’s imminent demise was particularly strong at the very beginning of the 1070s. And only five decades earlier, the Empire had undeniably been the strongest political and military power in the whole of Europe, and in the Middle East, too.³³⁷ In 1071, in the scope of mere months, Byzantium lost the city of Bari—the last mainstay of its domains in the south of the Apennine peninsula—to the Normans, while suffering a heavy defeat in the east, at Mantsikert in Asia Minor, from the Seljuk Turks who even managed to capture the basileus Romanos IV Diogenes (1067–1071). Added to this was the renewed activity of the so-called northern barbarian nomads, who entered the Byzantine lands by crossing the Danube and ravaged the theme of Paristrion, going even further south than the Haemus Mons (Stara Planina), in present-day Southern Bulgaria. The apocalyptic sentiments and perceptions inevitably intensified after the attacks on Byzantium by the nomads from the north (the Pechenegs, the Uzes and the Cumans), as well as from the Norman invasions led by Robert Guiscard (1059–1085) from the west. The latter had penetrated

334 Ioann Kinnam 1899, 7.

335 Nikita Khoniat 1860, 21.

336 Kniaz’kii 2003, 73.

337 Probably the best author to cast a light on the various turbulences of this period is Michael Attaleiates, see Michael Attaleiates 2012; see also Anna Comnina 1965.

the domains of the Byzantine Empire in southeastern Europe already in 1081 or 1083.³³⁸

It is easy to see that all these events occurred in the period directly before the year 1092. They made for a memorable beginning of the rule of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118). Here, I would just like to mention, that: 1) the same basileus succeeded in permanently subjugating both the Uzes and the Pechenegs (after the Battle of Levounion in 1091), and 2) something that is quite significant for our topic—he was the one who commissioned a special mosaic for the imperial palace with scenes from the Last Judgment. Perhaps Alexios I Komnenos had indeed been tempted to see himself as being the Last Roman Emperor before the *End of Times*.³³⁹

Of no lesser importance for the topic at hand is the image of the other potential (and from the 1080s onwards, also actual) invaders of the Byzantine lands: the Normans from present-day Italy. With regard of the *End of the world*, expected to occur around 1092, of special interest are their actions between the 1070s and the 1100s. Apart from Robert Guiscard, two other Norman leaders, Bohemund and his nephew, Tancred, earned the attention of the Byzantine princess Anna Komnene, who was exceptionally well versed in ancient literature. Despite her excellent knowledge of ancient clichés, however, Anna Komnene also left interesting descriptions of these three Westerners who became one of the main enemies of the Byzantine Empire in the period 1082–1108 (although it would perhaps be best to clarify that these particular Normans came to the lands of present-day Southern Italy from Normandy, i.e. from modern Northern France). It is probably no surprise that for the Byzantine princess, they were 'barbarians'. Nevertheless, Anna Komnene described the three Norman leaders in great detail, including their appearance, which was a "mirror" of their actions and feats. Like their fellow-countrymen, they were portrayed as ginger or blond-haired (*cf.* with the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic works, dating precisely from the late 11th–early 12th century, and the cliché for the people of the West, 'blonde beards'; on the latter, see more below, in Chapter 2 and 3), but also as brave and fearless warriors and forthright men. It is obvious that Robert Guiscard had made a lasting impression on Anna Komnene, who dedicated more than 20 pages of her work to him. This is actually hardly surprising given the fact (see below, Chapter 2) that already in the

338 Magdalino 2005, 47; the best account about Robert Guiscard and the Byzantine policy regarding him during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos continues to be the work of the emperor's own daughter, Anna Komnene, the *Alexiad*. See Anna Comnina 1965.

339 Magdalino 1993, 26.

1070s, during the reign of Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078) in Constantinople, Guiscard began to nurture ambitions of ascending the Byzantine throne. This ignited a long war between the Byzantines and the Sicilian Normans, the very first few years of which exposed some of the flaws of the Byzantine armies. It eventually came to a point when Alexios I Komnenos was forced to seek the help of Venice (in 1082 and 1084), offering in return not only precious gifts, but also great privileges for its fleet, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean.³⁴⁰ Khristo Matanov is inclined to see certain discrepancies between the image of the Normans given by Anna Komnene (beautiful, bold, but also known for their “Celtic bragging” (*sic*), cunning (*sic*) and treachery (*sic*) and surpassing in intrigue even “their teachers”, the Byzantines) and the general principles of creating the image of the *Enemy* in Byzantium, and also the opposition Byzantines—Normans, in particular.³⁴¹ This fact is not surprising *per se*, given the well-known rhetorical technique of glorifying the enemy, in order to make the best features and extraordinary abilities of the ones praised stand out even more. The one being praised by Anna Komnene, in this case, was none other than her father, Alexios I Komnenos, whose authority after his victories over the Uzes and Pechenegs, and also the Normans from Southern Sicily, rose to spectacular levels. In fact, it would be hard to forget that Anna Komnene wrote her work as a laudation of her father’s deeds and largely as a counterpoint to those of her brother John II Komnenos (1118–1143), who ascended the throne after the death of Alexios I in 1118. As is well known, John treated his sister and her husband quite harshly—an insult that she never managed to forget.

The common people in the western parts of Byzantium (present-day Greece, Northern Macedonia and Albania) at that time also had immediate impressions of the Normans, as well as an established perception of them. For example, the population of Kastoria (also known as Kostur) did not believe that the Normans had departed to recapture the Holy Land in the name of the Cross alongside the other knights from the First Crusade. Rather, they firmly believed that the Sicilian Normans were the same former invaders from the 1080s, who had fought—at times quite successfully—against the Byzantine armies, and unsurprisingly called them “tyrants” and “gladiators”. The local inhabitants of present-day Greece, Northern Macedonia and Albania along the well known since Antiquity road Via Egnatia, opposed the idea of establishing permanent trading posts with the Normans, suspecting them of having ulterior motives: to

340 The detailed description of Robert Guiscard can be seen in Anna Comnina 1965, 75–90, 362–363; Matanov S.a., 103–109, esp. 104–108; see also Gagova 2004, 24–27, 29–31, 34–36, as well as Dimitrov 2014, 26–29.

341 Matanov S.a., 108–109.

ravage their lands and plunder their cities. It is obvious that the recent serious conflicts with the Normans affected the views on knights not only of the ordinary subjects of the basileus in the Western Balkans, but also of many of the learned men of those times, including, in particular, some writers. These 'burning' memories were also fed by the notion of the religious division between the eastern and the western part of Christianity, which had emerged in the late 11th and in the 12th centuries. This perception fostered further distrust and even animosity between the two (Christian) halves of the European continent.³⁴²

1.3.3 *Symbolic Acts in Constantinople before 1200*

There are enough reasons to presume that the emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195; 1203–1204) also saw himself as the basileus of the *Last Times*, believing in the prophecies of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara³⁴³ about the Xylokerkos Gate, through which the hordes of the Ishmaelites were expected to invade, before destroying it and reaching Visa.³⁴⁴ According to the account of Niketas Choniates, the basileus ordered this very gate of Constantinople, the Xylokerkos, to be walled off so as not to let the German crusaders enter the capital.³⁴⁵ In fact, said prophecy aimed against the Germans in the late 1180s, is a combination of the older prediction for 'blonde beards'/'the blond race' and that of the enemy that would invade precisely from that gate of Constantinople and be thrown back to the so-called Forum of the Ox/Forum bovis.³⁴⁶ And since, as Niketas Choniates asserts, the emperor Isaac II Angelos believed that he was destined to reign for 32 years,³⁴⁷ the adaptation of such old motifs from the late 7th century to the situation in Byzantium in the late 1180s by Patriarch Dositheos should not be surprising.³⁴⁸ Also worth recalling is the fact that Patriarch Dositheos (1189; second time—1189–1191) was accused by some of his contemporaries of dabbling in sorcery and various other practices that did not behoove a Christian, and even less the patriarch of Constantinople. These speculations with the events of the times, 'interpreted' by Dositheos through the prism of the 'Last Emperor' cliché, can be perceived even better by reading the *History* of Niketas Choniates, who did not spare his view that the basileus had let himself be led by the nose by Dositheos, or, more accurately,

342 See Gagova 2004, 30, 34, 36; Dimitrov 2014, 30–35.

343 Shivarov 2013, 128.

344 See Ivanov 2014, 544–546.

345 Nicetas Choniates 1975, 404.

346 For more details on these motifs, see Magdalino 2007, 96–100, esp. 100.

347 Nicetas Choniates 1975, 419.

348 Magdalino 2007, 100 and n. 35 and 37.

“by the ears”, believing that these prophecies stemmed from certain “Books of Solomon”.³⁴⁹

1.3.4 *Testimonies of the End in Byzantine Art*

Byzantine art also did not remain indifferent to the issues concerning the *End of the world* and the Last Judgment. From the Byzantine viewpoint, the Last Judgment, in its symbolism, stands for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and also shows His triumph over death, which is also a victory for Hell’s prisoners, i.e. the dead. It is in this connection that the scene *Descent into Hell* is included in the Byzantine imagery of the ‘Second Coming’.³⁵⁰ In countries influenced by Byzantine art the scene of the Last Judgment can usually be found on the western wall of the nave or in the narthex of churches.³⁵¹ Such compositions can be seen in a number of outstanding monuments of Byzantine art (or art influenced by it) from the period in question, and below I will focus briefly on some of them in order to add a greater depth to the context of interest.

It is customary to believe that the standardization of the Last Judgment scene in Byzantium can be traced back to the earliest such monument from the Church of Panagia ton Chalkeon in Thessaloniki (1028–1029), although this scene was present in Georgian pictorial art, for instance, since the 10th century.³⁵²

The church of Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis (present-day Greece), the pictorial complex of which was created at the threshold of the 11th century (according to David Talbot Rice, while Victor Lazarev suggests the first quarter of the 11th century), contains a scene named “Descent of the Holy Ghost”, which, according to David T. Rice, has apocalyptic force.³⁵³ The scene “Descent into Hell”, in particular, can also be found in another monument that was emblematic for this period: the church of the Nea Moni Monastery on the island of Chios.³⁵⁴ This mosaic scene was completed around the mid-11th century and is exceptionally important in view of the iconography of the *Resurrection of Christ*; there, Christ is depicted shattering the gates of Hell and resurrecting Adam.³⁵⁵ The church was built and decorated under the personal supervision of the aforementioned emperor Constantine IX Monomachos.³⁵⁶

349 Nicetas Choniates 1975, 383, 558.

350 Details, see in Grabar 1936, 245–258; Shalina 1994, 230–269. See here, Ills. 1–2.

351 Temerinski 2010, 309.

352 Temerinski 2010, 310; Privalova 1980, 223–229.

353 Rice 2002, 84; cf. Lazarev 1986, Tables—ill. 158.

354 In general, see Lazarev 1986, 75–76, and also Tables—ill. 148, 150, 151 and 152.

355 See here, Ill. 1.

356 Rice 2002, 85–86 and ill. 81; see also Lazarev 1986, 75–76.

A special depiction of St. Michael the Archangel in the Nea Moni church can be seen in the conch of the credence, in particular in the scene "Transfiguration of Christ".³⁵⁷ An illustration of the Last Judgment is also present in a gospel illumination, preserved in the National Library in Paris (*Paris. gr. 74, fol. 5r*), dated to the third quarter of the 11th century.³⁵⁸

Amid the heightened interest in St. Michael in Western Europe in the 10th–11th centuries, and the rather large number of Byzantine emperors named Michael in the 11th century, we should hardly regard as purely coincidental the various beautiful images of the same Archangel that permeated Byzantine art prior to 1200. Here, I would simply like to mention the illuminations of exceptional quality, contained in a manuscript of St. John Chrysostom's *Homilies*. It was created for Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078–1081) probably around 1078 and is preserved today in the National Library in Paris (*Coislin 79*). On one of the pages there, on a gold background that seemingly re-created the notion of extra-temporality and extra-spatiality, highly typical of the Byzantine aesthetics, the basileus is depicted frontally, standing between the upright figures of St. John Chrysostom and St. Michael the Archangel.³⁵⁹ Conversely, the third quarter of the same 11th century marked the culmination in the development of illuminated books in Byzantium.³⁶⁰

St. Michael can also be seen on a fresco from Kastoria (Kostur), dated to c. 1191.³⁶¹ The small plastic arts as well can provide examples of exquisitely crafted images of the Archangel, one of which is the gold-plated steatite icon from the 12th century, kept in the Bandini Museum in Fiesole, near Florence.³⁶²

The monumental (mosaic) art of the Sicilian Normans, heavily influenced by Byzantium, as well as that of the Venetians,³⁶³ also offers numerous examples of popular scenes which were directly linked to the anticipation of the *End of Times*. For instance, the western wall of the cathedral in Torcello (near Venice) contains a well-preserved mosaic with scenes of the Last Judgment.³⁶⁴ It offers one of the most comprehensive interpretations of this iconographic

357 Lazarev 1986, Tables—ill. 145.

358 Lazarev 1986, Tables—ill. 195; Temerinski 2010, 309.

359 See Rice 2002, 114, and ill. 112; Lazarev 1986, 90, Tables—ill. 237–238.

360 Lazarev 1986, 90.

361 Rice 2002, 176–177; for a general overview of the Kastoria churches and their decoration from the 12th century, see Lazarev 1986, 102.

362 Rice 2002, 121 and ill. 118.

363 For further details on this influence, see Lazarev 1986, 113–122.

364 Dating from the first half of the 12th century (?), according to David Rice, or from the late 12th–early 13th century, according to Viktor Lazarev; see also Temerinski 2010, 309 with cited literature.

theme that was already popular in the Romanesque art of the West,³⁶⁵ although the images of the Last Judgment would become quite numerous during the Gothic period. And yet, based on the findings of Viktor Lazarev and other world-renowned scholars of Byzantine art, it should be clarified that especially in Venice and in the Basilica of St. Mark, in particular, there is no ‘pure’ Byzantine art, but rather a ‘Romanesque version’ of it (with its typical heavy forms and excessive ornateness, as well as the markedly linear and schematic interpretation of images in the mosaics, with shapes of varying sizes in the same scenes, etc.).³⁶⁶

In the abbey of Sant’Angelo in Formis, in present-day Italy (the late 11th–late 12th century), we can again find frescoes with motifs of the Last Judgment, as well as a half-length figure of Saint Michael the Archangel in the lunette over the entrance, and in the lower segment—an orant Mother of God *Orans* in a medallion, being lifted to the Heavens by two angels. Since the inscriptions on the frescoes are in Greek, a logical conclusion would be that this is the work of a Byzantine master, somewhere from the last quarter of the 12th century. Viktor Lazarev even goes so far as to suggest that the unknown artist had been trained in some Greek-Sicilian (*sic*) workshop.³⁶⁷ “Descent of the Holy Ghost” can also be found in the west dome of St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice.³⁶⁸

1.4 Expectations for the *End of Times* in Kievan Rus’

It should be emphasized from the very beginning that during the period in question, Rus’ was not an empire in the narrow sense of the word (it lacked both a ‘tsar’ and a ‘patriarch’—the two leading figures of the secular and spiritual spheres of the Eastern Orthodox world). Nevertheless, during the reign of Prince Vladimir and especially under Iaroslav the Wise, Rus’ copied the *topoi* of Constantinople, which were significant precisely in the above aspect of the ‘chosen kingdom’ and ‘chosen people’. Kievan Rus’ also followed a number of paradigms that were already established in Danube Bulgaria (especially during the rule of tsars Simeon and Petur). These paradigms presented the Bulgarians as a ‘chosen people’, not only as a result of their Christianization after 865 (as shall be seen below, it was linked to the basileus Michael III, who proved to be significant—though in a different way—both for the Bulgarians and the

365 See Rice 2002, 164–166, ill. 164, and Lazarev 1986, 119, Tables—ill. 389–390.

366 Lazarev 1986, 119, 120.

367 Lazarev 1986, 113–114, Tables—ill. 375.

368 Lazarev 1986, 120, 121.

Rus'), but also due to the introduction of the Slavic language and liturgy as the primary ones in public life.³⁶⁹ The logic of these facts led me to include Kievan Rus' into the present study.

The perceptions of the years 992/1000 as the *End of Times* and the impending onset of the Last Judgment could hardly have been widely known in Kievan Rus' at the end of the 10th century, since it had converted to Christianity only shortly before, in 988/989—i.e. right before the emergence of this anticipation in the Christian world.³⁷⁰ This view, however, must be juxtaposed with another observation which correlates, at least indirectly, with a number of issues that gravitate around the concepts of the 'chosen people' and 'chosen kingdom'. Some of them can be glimpsed in the deeds of Prince Vladimir, but they emerge as a comprehensive program only later, in the times of his successors, and especially during the reign of Prince Iaroslav the Wise (1019–1054; independent rule—1036–1054). These events will be discussed at length below, and my aim will be to outline the overall process of establishment of the perception of Kievan Rus' as the "center of the world", and its capital, Kiev—as a city that imitated the "eye of the Universe" (i.e. Constantinople),³⁷¹ as well as the means with which this notion was implemented up to the mid-11th century. This will help explain, to a large extent, the emergence of such apocalyptic expectations around 1092, primarily regarding the Cuman invasions, which will be detailed in the next chapter.

1.4.1 *The Rus': the New 'Chosen People' of God*

The picture described by the written sources and archaeological evidence from the lands of Kievan Rus' after 988 shows "the active embracement of rituals related to the individual eschatology, the salvation of the soul, the Last Judgment, etc."³⁷² The impression created by the Last Judgment scenes, as described in the ancient Rus'ian monument, is actually a well-known Christian motif/*topos* that can be encountered as an explanatory motif also in other similar conversions. The closest analogue to this historical recording can be found in the work of Theophanes Continuatus (the mid-10th century), where the baptism of the ruler of Danube Bulgaria, Boris-Michael (852–889, † 907) is presented in a similar way: the soul of the latter was filled with "the fear of God" when a Byzantine monk and iconographer, Methodius, depicted the Last

369 For more details, see Mikhailov 1990, esp. 136–144; Kaimakamova 2012, 21–29; Turilov 2012, 199–219, 262–285, 519–555, 704–708.

370 A different opinion has been expressed by Petrukhin 1995, 216 ff.; cf. also Petrukhin 2011, 168–170.

371 Danilevskii 1999, 134.

372 Petrukhin 2002, 87.

Judgment.³⁷³ The same motif regarding the Last Judgment is also present in another tradition, similar to that of the Rus', since it, too, is related in its origins to Scandinavia, in particular Norway and the Icelanders. Thus, the Icelandic sagas dedicated to Olaf Tryggvason describe how the Norwegian king received his baptism (in truth, proclamation) in Constantinople, after having a vision of the Last Judgment. Furthermore, according to one saga, Olaf was the ruler who tried to convince the Kievan Prince Vladimir to become a Christian.³⁷⁴

In both cases, however, the motif of the Last Judgment points to the Byzantine tradition, since the space reserved for the proclamation in the church was in its westernmost part, and specifically the narthex, which also had scenes of the Last Judgment and the tortures in Hell.³⁷⁵ Although the iconography of the Last Judgment was not yet fully developed at that age, both the baptism of the Rus' and that of the Norwegian konung took place at a crucial time for the medieval man: around the years 992/1000, when, as can be surmised also from this book, many expected the *End of the world*, the Coming of Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ.³⁷⁶

In Byzantium, the old perception of the Rus' that associated them with the *Rosh* people, well known from *Book of Ezekiel*, re-emerged namely in the second half of the 10th century, and especially on the threshold of the following 11th century. According to the biblical *topos*, at the *End of Times* the *Rosh* were expected to become a punishing force against the sinful people in the Promised Land and especially in Constantinople, in its role as the 'new Jerusalem'.³⁷⁷ Here again, worth noting is the interesting fact of the dramatic increase in missionary activity in Europe shortly before and around the year 1000. As a result, both the Hungarians and the Poles permanently embraced Christianity, as did a number of people in Scandinavia, including even the remote Icelanders; the Latin West also initiated unprecedented missionary efforts among the Pechenegs, Old Prussians, Yotvingians and others.³⁷⁸ Whether or not this was somehow related to the anticipation of the Second Coming, when people would have to be baptized in order to have some chance

373 Prodolzhatel' Feofana 1992, 73, IV.15; Petrukhin 2002, 87.

374 Jackson 1993, 138–139, 147 ff.; Petrukhin 2002, 87.

375 Kazhdan 1968, 117; on the correspondence between the symbolism of the Second Coming (and the Last Judgment) and that of the 'Descent into Hell', see once more Grabar 1936, 245–258, as well as Shalina 1994, 230–269.

376 Gurevich 1984, 133, 158; Petrukhin 2002, 87–88.

377 See the titles on this topic mentioned in Chapter 2, as well as Poppe 1989, 218–219.

378 Among the numerous studies on this subject matter, see, for instance Wood 2001; Kuznetsova 2002, 35–59; Kuznetsova 2002b, 340–397.

of saving their souls, is another matter. According to Ian N. Wood,³⁷⁹ for instance, such a direct link cannot be traced in the sources from the time period in question.

How exactly did the Rus' create their new identity as a 'chosen people'? In the process of its establishment, did they allow themselves to manipulate the testimonies from the Old and the New Testament, as well as historical facts from the past immediately preceding the date of their conversion? The answers to these two significant questions will be sought in the next few pages.

The altar arch of the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kiev, for instance, contains a partly preserved inscription in Greek, dating from the mid-11th century, which leaves no doubt as to the attempts of Kievan Rus' to establish the notion of the Rus' 'divine chosenness'. The inscription is a reference to Psalms 45:6, the context of which³⁸⁰ evidently points to the City of God, Zion and the center of the world, Jerusalem, with its Temple. The meaning of the inscription is clear: it alludes to a prophecy of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Undoubtedly, the initial formulas in this direction were Byzantine, stemming from a very early age, but nevertheless perceptibly visible in the psalteries from the 10th–11th centuries.³⁸¹

It is certain that during the times of Iaroslav the Wise, a church with the name St. Sophia was built (in 1045–1050) also in the second in importance and chronologically older center of the Rus', Novgorod, which is also evidenced in the so-called *Novgorod First Chronicle* (*Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis'*).³⁸² A St. Sophia Cathedral was also erected in Polotsk by the mid-11th century,³⁸³ although from 1044 onwards that city was ruled by the opponent of Iaroslav the Wise, Vseslav. These three cathedrals, dedicated to the Holy Wisdom, clearly indicate the existence of a cohesive trend and line of thought during the first half of the 11th century in Rus', regardless of the political practices of its individual regional rulers.³⁸⁴

Furthermore, the cathedrals in the main cities of Kievan Rus', dedicated either to the Apostles (the late 10th century, in Belgorod, near Kiev), to St. Sophia (Kiev, Novgorod, Polotsk), or to the Transfiguration of Christ (directly after 988, in Chernigov), can be expanded with one more: the church of St. Michael the

379 An opinion shared in a private discussion.

380 See Ps. 45:5 and Ps. 47:2.

381 Danilevskii 1999, 135 and n. 7, 136.

382 *Novgorodskaia Pervaiia Letopis'* 1950, 181; see also Petrukhin 2002, 116–118; Podskalsky 1996, Annex—443–444.

383 See Podskalsky 1996, Annex—443–444, who is inclined to date it to 988 or 1015/1024; see also Franklin, Shepard 1996, 212–214, 251.

384 Petrukhin 2002, 118, 132.

Archangel in Pereiaslav' (either immediately after 988, or after 1036).³⁸⁵ This outlines a situation that brings to the forefront not only the worship of Jesus Christ in the Rus'ian lands, but also that of St. Michael the Archangel, the warrior of God before the *End of Times*. In fact, a large cathedral dedicated to the same archangel was also built in Kiev, and the following fact speaks of its exceptional significance: around 1112, mosaicists from Constantinople were specifically called to Kiev to decorate this cathedral.³⁸⁶ Thus, the outlined picture of the cathedrals, erected in Kievan Rus' during the initial five-six decades after its conversion, leaves no doubt as to the intentions of St. Vladimir the Baptist and especially those of his son, Iaroslav the Wise. The views of both rulers can be expressed through such medieval Christian *topoi* as 'chosen people'/'chosen land' and 'holy metropolitan center', all of them under the auspices of the Lord, the Mother of God and St. Michael the Archangel; and all of them having as their archetypes both the ancient Jerusalem and the 'New' one on the Bosphorus. As is well known, it is such *common places* that are directly connected to the subject matter surrounding the *End of the times* and the end of the 'chosen people' and its kingdom before Judgment Day.

Hence, already in the first half of the 11th century, the learned men of Kievan Rus' perceived their land as one with a mission, and its people as 'chosen'. The Rus'ian *Sofia First Chronicle* (or *Sofiiskaia pervaiia letopis'* in the original), for example, promises to recount "how God chose our land for the Last Times" ("*kako izbra Bog stranu nashu na poslednee vremia*").³⁸⁷ According to Igor' Danilevskii, in the 1030s, during the reign of Prince Iaroslav the Wise, the perception of Kiev as the 'new Jerusalem'³⁸⁸ began to take form; and as is known, this notion goes hand in hand with the idea of the 'chosen people'. This can explain the emergence in this city on the Dnieper of such emblematic *topoi*, known from Constantinople, as the monasteries of St. George and St. Irina and especially the St. Sophia Cathedral, and also the Golden Gate (with the Church of the Annunciation), which literary imitated the Golden Gate of the Byzantine capital and its famous church from the Justinian age, Hagia Sophia, and so on.³⁸⁹

Of course, such an imitation of Constantinople is by no means coincidental, since the 'new chosen people' of Kievan Rus' needed to self-represent and to present themselves in the eyes of the *Others* through symbolic *topoi* that were

385 Podskalsky 1996, Annex—443–444.

386 For more details, see Lazarev 1973, 131–146.

387 *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* 1925, 8.

388 Danilevskii 1999, 145.

389 For more details, see Petrukhin 2002, 60–132, esp. 117–118; Aseev 1982, 43–45; Franklin, Shepard 1996, 210–211, see also the Russian edition of Franklin, Shepard 2000, 304–306.

adequate for a Christian capital. In view of the fact that at that point, Preslav was under Byzantine control and was no longer perceived as the capital of the first of its kind (i.e. Slavic-speaking) tsardom of the Bulgarians after its fall in 1018, there was hardly a better model for imitation than the Constantinople archetype. And the Bulgarians themselves, as is known, had already established the above-mentioned model long before 988; so the Rus' had only to copy it or to re-arrange its symbolic aspects in their own, new way, through *words* and *images*.

The motif of the 'new chosen people' was particularly well-developed by Metropolitan Hilarion (1051–1054) in his prominent work, *Sermon on Law and Grace (Slovo o Zakone i Blagodati)*,³⁹⁰ written sometime between 1037 and 1050.³⁹¹ For Hilarion, the glory of the Rus' princes was much greater than that of the ancient rulers from the Old Testament, since the former ruled over a newly enlightened people, i.e. of the New Testament: "not in a poor and unknown land, but in Rus', which is known and celebrated by all to the four ends of the earth" ("*ne v khude ... i nevedome zemli vladych'stvovala, n' v Rus'ke, iazhe vedoma i slyshima est' vsemi chetyr'mi kontsi zemli*"). As Vladimir Petrukhin rightfully points out,³⁹² the phrase "the four ends of the earth" is not a mere metaphor for worldly glory, but signifies the notion that Rus' has inherited the past glory of Ancient Israel, i.e. the land of the first chosen people of God (*cf.* the words of Ezekiel (7:2): "... thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel: An end! The end is come upon the four corners of the land.")

Metropolitan Hilarion glorified Prince Vladimir and Prince Iaroslav the Wise for providing the Rus'ian lands with the grace of God in the *Last Times*, which feat was "known and celebrated by all to the four ends of the earth". According to Hilarion's *Sermon*, with the erection of the Church of the Annunciation, Iaroslav the Wise put "your people" (i.e. the Rus' of Prince Vladimir—*Author's note*) and the "holy city" under the care of the Mother of God, patron of all Orthodox Christians. Here, however, is a very symbolically 'telling' motif and image: the kiss given by the Archangel to the Blessed Virgin, "that the kiss, which the archangel will offer to the Virgin, may also be upon this city" ("*da ezhe tselovanie arkhangel dast' Devitsi budet i gradu semu*"). This kiss is namely the Good News and salutation to the Virgin Mary, "Rejoice, Blessed One, God is with thee" ("*raduisia, obradovanaia, Gospod's toboiu*"), but

390 See the Russian version of the text in Moldovan 1984.

391 The literature dealing with its dating as well as its genre and the reasons for its creation is considerable; see, for instance, Alekseev 1999, 289–291; Senderovich 1999, 43–57; Moldovan 1984; Moldovan and Iurchenko 1989, 5–18; Danilevskii 1999, 137 and n. 11 and 12; Franklin, Shepard 1996, 213–215; Chekova 2013, 111–114, 125.

392 Petrukhin 2002, 121.

referring to the capital Kiev, it actually symbolizes a greeting and protection for this city chosen by God: “Rejoice, faithful city, God is with thee” (“*raduisia blagovernnyi grade, Gospod’ s toboiu*”).³⁹³

Hilarion goes even further, presenting Kiev in a more significant light than even Constantinople itself—the center of God’s ‘new’ chosen people of the New Testament this time, the Byzantines. By this logic, the ‘glad tidings’ would be spread from the Rus’ian lands, and not from Israel/Jerusalem or Constantinople. According to Metropolitan Hilarion, it was no coincidence that the baptizer of the Rus’, Vladimir, took the cross from Constantinople to Rus’, together with his grandmother, Olga.³⁹⁴ Such an assertion, though naturally lacking any historical validity, is nevertheless significant in view of the imaginative and deliberately ‘distorted’ visions of some medieval (Rus’ian) authors.

The widely-known written document, known as the *Primary Chronicle*, *Povest’ vremennykh let*, or ‘Tale of Years Past’, (its final version is usually associated with the rule of Vladimir Monomakh, although most likely it initially appeared during the second decade of the 12th century), also marks the emergence of the Rus’ on the historical world stage. This is equivalent to an appearance on the margins of the history of Salvation: in 860, during the rule of the Byzantine basileus Michael III († 867), the Rus’ attacked Constantinople with their fleet.³⁹⁵ There is no need to dwell at length on the symbolic dimensions of the name *Michael* both in the Old Testament and in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, a truly archetypal work for the apocalypticism of the late 7th century, since these aspects will be discussed repeatedly further on in this study (see below, Chapter 2 and 3). What is more important is to emphasize the fact that the *Novgorod First Chronicle* (*Novgorodskaia perviaia letopis’*) explicitly states that before the Rus’ campaign against Constantinople, the Byzantine throne was occupied by Michael III. Together with his mother Theodora (mistakenly called Irina in the Rus’ian text), he revived iconolatry in 843, returning his Empire on the path of righteousness and, respectively, on the path of its salvational mission. Thus, for the unknown Rus’ian author (Nestor?), the Rus’ campaign of 860 also acquired an eschatological dimension: the Rus’ appeared at the gates of Constantinople, the ‘city blessed by God’, seemingly to fulfill Ezekiel’s prophecy of the people of Gog and Magog or of ‘*Kniaz Rosh*’.³⁹⁶ In the Russian chronicle tradition, however, this episode was unexpectedly

393 Chekova 2013, 111.

394 Petrukhin 2002, 121–122.

395 Kazhdan 1996, 187–196; Istrin 1897; Danilevskii 1995, 105 ff.; Petrukhin 2011, 137–138.

396 The title *kniaz* is the Slavic equivalent to ‘prince’.

transformed into the beginning of the history of a new, God's chosen people of the New Testament, namely the Rus'. This was naturally affirmed by the easily traced link between the basileus Michael III and the mission with the Slavic books of the Saints Cyril and Methodius, sent by him and the Patriarch Photios (the so-called Great Moravian mission of 862/3). Another likely argument in support of this was the fact that it was under Michael III's rule that the Danube Bulgarians, who had actually upheld the work of Cyril and Methodius, entered into the fold of Orthodoxy in 864/5.³⁹⁷ The books of Cyril and Methodius were also the ones that the Rus' studied from after 988/989.

And another significant thing with regard to the aforementioned attack of the Rus'ian fleet: the campaign was led by Askold and Dir and the chronicle dated it to around 866, i.e. the very end of Michael III's rule,³⁹⁸ although in reality it was carried out six years earlier. The emphasis on the end of the reign of the Byzantine basileus, who was killed in 867, is hardly coincidental: while for some it was an *end*, for others, specifically the Rus', this campaign was perceived to be a kind of *beginning*.

This same beginning of Rus'ian history undoubtedly takes its roots from the archetype of the Holy biblical story, the continuation of which for the Rus'ian historians was namely the story of the Rus' as the new 'chosen people'.³⁹⁹ Vladimir Petrukhin even perceives the *Primary Chronicle* to be "conceptually permeated" by the biblical worldview,⁴⁰⁰ in which the *beginning* and the *end* are extremely significant parameters for positioning in the *chronos, eon* and from there—in the Salvation. Direct references to the *Book of Daniel*, in view of the change in worldly kingdoms, can also be found in the chronicle, in inserts stemming from the so-called *Chronicle taken from the Great Narrative (Khronograf po Velikomu izlozheniiu)*. They deal with the prophecy of the Judaic priests about Alexander the Great who would "take the kingdom" of Darius, and also about the liberation of the Jews from Babylonian captivity, which would happen with the help of St. Michael the Archangel. The subject matter of these inserts is connected to the campaigns of the Rus' *kniazy* (princes), led by Vladimir Monomakh and directed against the terrible Cumans (for further details on them, see below, Chapter 2); the campaigns are placed in the final part of the *Primary Chronicle*.⁴⁰¹

397 See Tvorogov 1974, 105–106; Tvorogov 1975, 259; Petrukhin 2011, 138–139.

398 Petrukhin 2011, 140.

399 See Fedotov 2001; Picchio 2003; Petrukhin 2011, 145.

400 Petrukhin 2011, 141.

401 Petrukhin 2011, 145.

According to Aleksei Alekseev,⁴⁰² in the decades leading up to the 1070s, at least, Kievan Rus' did not show any fear regarding the expected coming of Antichrist. Moreover, judging by various parts of the so-called *Sviatoslav's Miscellany* (*Izbornik na Svetoslav*) from 1073 (as is well known, its original was Bulgarian and has been linked to the circle of Tsar Simeon and the Bulgarian ruler himself) and from *Sermon on Law and Grace* and *Memorial and Panegyric of Prince Vladimir* (*Pamiat' i pokhvala kniazuiu Vladimiru*) by Jacob the Monk, Alekseev sees more reason to presume an eschatological optimism in the Rus'ian lands, rather than a fear of the *End of the world*. This is actually quite understandable, since the Rus'—as any newly enlightened and Christianized people—were more likely to display heightened spirits and optimism. Something similar can be also seen among the Danube Bulgarians, in the decades after 886 and leading up to the mid-10th century. Only such a joyfully-elated religious attitude could explain the baptism of the remains of the princes Iaropolk Sviatoslavich and Oleg Sviatoslavich, which, according to the *Primary Chronicle*, occurred in 1044.⁴⁰³ Alekseev points to one more fact that can be seen as indirect evidence of this elation and religious optimism: the extremely small number of monks that came from the princely family.⁴⁰⁴ Up until the late 12th century, only one prince voluntarily embraced the monastic life; that was Nikolai Davydovich, also known as 'Sviatosha' (meaning "devotee").⁴⁰⁵

Another fact, essential for the topic at hand, are the translations of a number of significant apocalyptic and eschatological works that emerged in Kievan Rus' no later than the 12th century. These include the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, the *Vitae* of St. Andrew the Fool,⁴⁰⁶ St. Basil the Younger and St. Niphon of Constantia, the *Sermon* and *Treatise* of Hippolytus of Rome on the coming of Antichrist and the end of the world.⁴⁰⁷ As is well known, the majority of these works reached Kievan Rus' as the result of translations, made by the Danube Bulgarians already in the 10th century. Some of them have been seriously manipulated in the times of Iaroslav the Wise, including the "omission" of important facts to the advantage of Rus'ian history in general and the proclaimed mission of the Rus' to be 'God's chosen people'

402 Alekseev 2002, 56, 57.

403 *Povest' vremennykh let* 1950, 104; Alekseev 2002, 57.

404 Alekseev 2002, 57.

405 Sazonov 1994, 50–52; Alekseev 2002, 57.

406 For further details on him, see Rydén 1974, 197–261; *Zhitie Andreia Iurodivogo* 2001; regarding the topos of the Last Emperor and the Byzantine apocalyptic tradition in connection with St. Andrew the Fool, see also Kraft 2012a, 240 ff.

407 For further details, see Tvorogov 1990, 196–225; Alekseev 2002, 56.

in particular. This is especially evident in the recreation of the mission of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, and especially their invention of the Slavic alphabet. This momentous fact is reduced to the activity of Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher only, with the mission itself presented as done by divine commandment and the letters themselves now being ... Rus'ian. Moreover, in some of the works that were evidently translated during the rule of Prince Iaroslav before the mid-11th century, the achievement of the Danube Bulgarians of preserving the Slavic script after 886 is wholly lacking. While the (failed) mission with this alphabet among the Moravians, Czechs and Poles is explicitly mentioned, nothing is said about the Bulgarian role after the death of St. Methodius. Of course, the motives behind the Rus'ian writers' decision to omit this information are quite clear: after 1018, Danube Bulgaria ceased to exist as the first Slavic-speaking independent tsardom and the Bulgarians were no longer the 'new chosen people of God'. This would lead to the conclusion that this mission was taken up by the mighty Rus', who were on the rise at that time.⁴⁰⁸

1.4.2 *The Capital City of Kiev (Late 10th–12th Centuries): Imitating Jerusalem and Constantinople*

A landmark building of St. Vladimir the Baptist, with regard to the allusions of Kiev as Jerusalem and, consequently, the *topoi* of the 'chosen people' and the 'holy (capital) center', can be found in the so-called Church of the Tithes in Kiev (dedicated to the Assumption of the Mother of God), the first Rus'ian church made of stone and a replica of the Jerusalem Temple. The Church of the Tithes was consecrated in 996 (on 11 May—*cf.* the fact that Constantinople was consecrated on this very day by Emperor Constantine the Great to ... the Mother of God) and it is hardly a coincidence that it was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.⁴⁰⁹ As has been long known, the Holy Mother has been the patron of the 'emblem' Constantinople at least since the city's Avar-Persian siege of 626.

Together with this, the Church of the Tithes in Kiev is a predecessor of the Kievan Cathedral of St. Sophia, the analogue of Constantinople's main church, Hagia Sophia, the Church of Divine Wisdom.⁴¹⁰ It was also consecrated on an important date, 12 May 1046, the Sunday associated with the preceding feast of the 'renewal of Constantinople' and the consecration of the new capital

408 For further details on this, see in Veder 2003, 375–395 and esp. 379, 390, 391–393, as well as n. 44.

409 The literature on this issue is vast; among the studies from the last couple of decades see, for instance, Danilevskii 1999, 141; Petrukhin 2002, 92; Petrukhin 2011, 169; Franklin, Shepard 1996, 164–166.

410 Vagner 1994, 151–156.

(the ‘New Rome’) by the emperor Constantine the Great († 337).⁴¹¹ The *Primary Chronicle* makes an explicit allusion between the building of the Church of the Tithes and the erection of the first Temple in Jerusalem,⁴¹² by following the same, well-known model from the creation of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. This “orientation towards the Old Testament”, according to Vladimir Petrukhin, is “natural for Rus’”.⁴¹³ Petrukhin further postulates that the notion of the Mother of God as the patron of the Rus’ian lands and its princes had emerged as early as the late 10th–early 11th century.⁴¹⁴ Such a tendency towards the themes of the Old Testament and *chosenness, the Holy Mother, the capital-center*, etc. indicates that the Rus’ also followed well-known models and clichés for the association with *topoi* that were significant for all Christian states, and especially for their rulers and clergy. In the end, these *topoi* could not be based on anything other than the salvation of souls; which is but a step away from the *End of the world* and the Last Judgment.

In Kievan Rus’ in particular, many of the following steps in this direction would become apparent during the rule of Prince Iaroslav the Wise, when several notable texts were written, including Metropolitan Hilarion’s *Sermon on Law and Grace*. The latter even went so far as to call both Vladimir and Iaroslav the Wise ‘khagans’, i.e. emperors (on this aspect of the past, in view of the ideological opposition, as measured against the Danube Bulgarians and Khazaria, see in detail below, Chapter 3), although this did not lead to any specific ideological or political consequences. This development was undoubtedly aided by the fact that after the death of Mstislav who ruled the principality of Tmutarakan until 1036, Iaroslav the Wise became the sole and autocratic prince over all of Rus’. Immediately afterwards, in the entry for the year 1037 in the Russian *Primary Chronicle*, which was probably written sometime during the second decade of the 12th century, it is explicitly stated that Iaroslav ordered the founding of the new ‘great city’ in Kiev with a Golden Gate (the allusion being with the Golden Gate of Constantinople, as well as Jerusalem’s Golden Gate through which Jesus Christ had passed), and with a great church dedicated to St. Sophia (again, an allusion to Hagia Sophia of Constantinople!), alongside the above-mentioned churches of St. George and St. Irina, as well as

411 Lisovoi 1995, 58–64; Sverdlov 2004, 132–133.

412 For details on Jerusalem in Old Rus’ian historiography, see Alekseev 2003, 446–455.

413 See in detail, together with the cited literature, in Petrukhin 2002, 92 ff. and esp. 97, for specific quotes; on the likening of Vladimir the Baptist to Solomon and Constantine the Great, see Hanak 2014, 28–49, 56–57.

414 Petrukhin 2002, 100.

a church dedicated to the Annunciation. It is obvious, therefore, that the city of Kiev, situated along the Dnieper River, was envisioned as a replica of the Byzantine capital on the Bosphorus, Constantinople.⁴¹⁵

The St. Sophia Cathedral was mentioned in the chronicles both under the year 1017 (*Novgorod First Chronicle*) and under 1037 (*Primary Chronicle*), which makes it clear that it was conceived not by Iaroslav the Wise, but by his father, Prince Vladimir.⁴¹⁶ This conclusion is also based on the accounts found in western sources, including *Gallus Anonymus*, *Thietmar Merseburgensis* (*Thietmar of Merseburg*) and *Eimunds Saga*. Especially significant in this regard is the account of how when the Polish king Bolesław I Chrobry (999–1025) captured Kiev in 1018,⁴¹⁷ he touched the Kievan Golden Gate with his sword: a well-known medieval practice, marking the symbolic (and sometimes real) seizure of a city. Consequently, it appears that the program to imitate the Golden Gate of Constantinople ('concealing' the idea that Jesus Christ should enter Kiev namely by passing through them at the Second Coming), as well as the Byzantine Hagia Sophia, was already conceived and begun at the time of Prince Vladimir, baptized Vasilii,⁴¹⁸ and was carried out and finished by his son, Iaroslav the Wise. It is nonetheless assumed, also in view of the established tradition, that the completion of the church and its decoration was carried out between 1037 and 1047/1048, i.e. during the rule of the same Prince Iaroslav the Wise. The cathedral became the *place* of the Kievan metropolitan, the head of the Rus'ian spiritual hierarchy, just as Hagia Sophia in Constantinople was the *place* of the Byzantine.⁴¹⁹

The 'Byzantine-ness' of this cathedral was emphasized with deliberate care. It is hardly a coincidence that the inscriptions on the mosaics in the Kievan St. Sophia were written not in Old Church Slavonic, but in Greek: the parallels sought with the Constantinople archetype can be found almost everywhere with a single exception—the location of the Kievan church.⁴²⁰ We can therefore easily agree with the opinion of Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard that this was "the most direct form of cultural transference" and that for the time in question, the mid-11th century, "it was the fashion".⁴²¹

415 On the possibility that Iaroslav the Wise was seeking a similarity between Kiev and Constantinople, see in particular Franklin, Shepard 1996, 209–217.

416 Nikitenko 1997, 143–145.

417 See Kollinger 2014, 187–369.

418 For further details, see Nikitenko 1997, 141–145.

419 Franklin, Shepard 1996, 210, and n. 5.

420 Franklin, Shepard 1996, 212.

421 *Ibid.*

The Kievan metropolitan Hilarion went even further, declaring that the center of the ‘new chosen people’ was not Constantinople, but Kiev, where Prince Vladimir and Olga had brought the Cross of Christ, as if carried from the New Jerusalem.⁴²² It was indirectly implied that the Rus’ were the new ‘workers of the eleventh hour’, thus exceeding in expectations both the Khazars who professed Judaism and the Byzantines themselves. As Vladimir Petrukhin rightly points out, both the plot and the rhetorical formulae used by Hilarion are based on high-level examples of Byzantine eloquence.⁴²³ It is also quite plausible to assume that a large part of them were actually inherited from translations of several Old Bulgarian authors from the late 9th and the following 10th century, and of St. Climent of Okhrid in particular,⁴²⁴ which were actively used by Rus’ian scribes from the 11th–12th centuries. The *Sermon on Law and Grace* also reveals another idea: for Hilarion, and probably for other scholars of his time as well, the autocratic power in Rus’ had a providential meaning: it was no mere coincidence that Vladimir the Baptizer (who, as was already mentioned, received the name Vasilii at his baptism) was compared to Emperor Constantine the Great, and, together with Olga, likened to St. Constantine and St. Helena. They were presented in the aforementioned way, as the ones that brought the cross from the New Jerusalem (Constantinople): Vladimir “together with Olga brought the cross from the new Jerusalem, the city of Constantine, and put it over all of his land, affirming the faith” (“*s Olgoiu prines’sha krest’ ot novaago Ierusalima, Konstantina grada, po vsei zemli svoei postavivsha, utverdista veru*”).⁴²⁵

The allusions with Constantinople, as a city protected by the Mother of God, continued among the Rus’ also during the following 12th century. By the middle of the century, Prince Andrei Bogoliubskii, or “the God-Loving” († 1174), introduced a special feast, the festival of *Pokrov*, the Protecting Veil (of the Holy Mother of God), honoring in this way a saint’s vision of the Holy Mother and her veil in the Church of Blachernae in Constantinople. The Holy Mother protected the capital city of Byzantium, but from then on her veil would also provide heavenly protection to the Rus’ian city Vladimir-on-Kliazma. In order to establish this feast, alongside the subsequently famous icon of the so-called Virgin of Vladimir, Rus’ian churchmen amassed a whole collection of wondrous tales of healings and various other miracles. The icon itself was brought

422 Danilevskii 1999, 134.

423 Petrukhin 2002, 121–122.

424 Chekova 2013, 125.

425 Moldovan 1984, 97 (=191b3–191a12: from the first redaction of the *Sermon*, in accordance with C–597); Petrukhin 2002, 123; for general information on the ‘new Constantines’, see New Constantines 1993; Chekova 2013, 182–187.

from Kiev by order of Andrei Bogoliubskii, who had it installed in a prominent place in the Assumption Church in the above-mentioned northeastern Rus' city of Vladimir, where it healed many illnesses.⁴²⁶ Another specifically sought comparison between the great prince, the legacy of Byzantium and its image as the defender of Orthodoxy from the 'Saracens' can be seen in a text, perhaps written by Prince Andrei himself, which attempted to accentuate the latter's victory over the Muslim Volga Bulgars (1 August 1164). This victory was also gained thanks to the Virgin of Vladimir icon. Moreover—and this fact is too significant to be omitted—on that very same day, Constantinople celebrated the victory of Manuel I Komnenos over the 'Saracens'.⁴²⁷

1.4.3 *And All of Rus' Is under God's Protection*

The growth of the cult of the Mother of God in Kievan Rus' can be further analyzed with the help of several additional observations, related to the late 11th century, but permanently established in the 12th century. Naturally, they include the perception of the Virgin's cult as a city-protecting one, which again follows the Constantinople paradigm after 626. Thus, in 1073/1076, Rostov saw the erection of a large cathedral dedicated to the Assumption.⁴²⁸

The architectural evidence can be supplemented by evidence from the seals of the Kievan metropolitans from the first two centuries after the conversion.⁴²⁹ The name of Metropolitan Ephraim (the mid-11th century) is connected to a seal containing the image of St. Michael the Archangel.⁴³⁰ Seals of Metropolitan Theopemptus (1035–1040s) bear the image of St. John the Precursor, and St. George expectedly adorns the seal of Metropolitan George (1065–1076). The seals of Metropolitan John I (1077–1089) have the image of St. John. Only later, at the end of the century, did the first seals with the image of the Holy Mother of God appear. They were of the 'Sign' type during the times of Metropolitan John II (1090–1091), becoming Mother of God 'Hodigitria' during the times of Nikolai (1093–1104), and under his successor, Nikifor (1104–1122), they again returned to the 'Sign' type. From then on and until 1233 (the end of Kirill I's metropolitanacy), all seals of the highest-ranked cleric of Kievan Rus' would bear the image of the Mother of God of the Sign.⁴³¹ It is therefore evident that all through the 11th century, the metropolitan seals on their

426 Shepard 2012, 298.

427 Podskalsky 1996, 231; Shepard 2012, 299.

428 Podskalsky 1996, Annex—443–444.

429 The literature on this subject is substantial; see, for instance, more details in Ianin 1970; Kotyshev 2000, 61–73.

430 Ianin 1970/1, 253, no. 42; Kotyshev 2000, 61.

431 Kotyshev 2000, 63.

reverse sides predominantly contained images of saints and forces of the heavenly archangelic army. Dmitrii Kotyshev assumes that the images of St. John the Baptist, St. Michael the Archangel and St. John the Apostle represented the heavenly patron of the respective owner of the seal or suggest the existence of certain relations between the metropolitans of Rus' and the patriarchs of Constantinople.⁴³² Only at the very end of this century and all through the following 12th century would the image of the Holy Mother of God gain a truly exceptional place on the reverse sides of the metropolitan seals.⁴³³ In view of the remarkable worship of St. Michael in the West precisely until the end of the 11th century, however, one cannot help but wonder whether the tendency to choose as patrons warrior saints and the heavenly archangelic forces (also militant in their essence and with regard to the Salvation) even by the metropolitans is in any way related to the cult of warrior saints, which became widespread during the Early Middle Ages. Naturally, here, the answer to this question shall remain open.

After the mid-11th century, the Rus' encountered some very terrifying nomads along their southern borders. These came from south-southwest and were called Cumans or *Polovtsy*, in the Rus'ian tradition (see below, Chapter 2). They were 'archetypically' recognized by some Rus'ian monks as the people of 'Gog and Magog', and as the 'Ishmaelites/Ismaelians', who would appear before the *End of Times*. Which is why it is no surprise to find that also in Kievan Rus', filed under the year 1096 is the notion of Judgment Day and the *End of Times*. Here, I would just like to briefly highlight the most important aspects, as I will deal with this issue in more detail in Chapter 2.

The text in question is the work of a monk from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery and is related to the attack on Kiev by the Cumans/*Polovtsy* who also plundered the hinterland of the Rus'ian capital.⁴³⁴ It is easy to discern that the notion about the *End* could only be related to the idea of the *End of the world* that was once more expected by the Eastern Orthodox world to occur in the year 1092 (6600 years from the Creation – 5508 = 1092). This is why Rus' perceived itself as the center of the Christian world and expected to be attacked either by the 'Ishmaelites' or by the 'Gog and Magog' before Judgment Day, in accordance with the archetypal texts of the prophet Daniel and the Bible, as well as Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara (dating from the last quarter of the 7th century; most likely, especially according to Gerrit Reinink, from

432 Kotyshev 2000, 63–64; see also Ianin 1970, 46.

433 Kotyshev 2000, 63.

434 *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* 1962/1: clm. 231–232; Karpov 2002, 7.

691/692).⁴³⁵ It is then clear that for the Rus' during the 11th–12th centuries, the nomads coming from the south in particular, were the *arch-enemy* preceding the *End of Times*. This 'arch-evil' would eventually provoke further dimensions and nuances of the notion of the *End* in the Rus'ian lands, and mainly among the educated monks and writers of chronicles. However, it should be clarified that, against the backdrop of the aforementioned optimistic atmosphere that existed in the Rus'ian lands, the monks of this Lavra diverged in their vision of death⁴³⁶ and the *End* in general, which differed from the one shared by the laymen and the princely family. The monks were expected to be far more zealous and informed of the dogmas of the Church and their absolute observance, and to be significantly more knowledgeable of the Holy Scripture: something that was considerably harder to achieve for the common people of Kievan Rus'. Once we add to this the slow process of churching of the Rus', which stretched until the 14th century, it is no surprise that during the 11th–12th centuries, the Old Rus'ian Church did not have such effective means of influencing the laity, as the Churches of the East and the West did, including the system of penitent discipline, communions after mandatory confessions, etc.⁴³⁷ This could probably explain, at least to a certain degree, the differences between the perceptions of death, the attacks of the 'unclean peoples' and of the *End* in general, shared by the monks around Kiev, and those of the secular nobles and especially the common people.

And so, it appears that it took only a few decades after the baptism of Kievan Rus' for such notions as 'God's chosen people', 'Last Judgment', 'Christ's Second Coming', 'Heavenly Jerusalem', etc. to take permanent hold in the local written works. For instance, according to Irina Sterligova, the image of the 'Heavenly Jerusalem' became typical for "Rus'ian culture as a whole in the 11th century".⁴³⁸ For Aleksei Karpov, the eschatological expectations in Kievan Rus' can be found first and foremost in the official literature, which was monastic in its essence, and in particular in the chronicles, where they culminated only at the end of the 11th century. Karpov also claims that any clearly (*sic*) formulated eschatological expectations that appeared in the Rus'ian lands were related only to the year 1492.⁴³⁹ It seems to me that this last observation can help in explaining the existence of at least one significant distinction of the Rus'ian literary tradition until the mid-15th century: in contrast to the traditions of Western Europe,

435 See Karpov 2002, 13.

436 Alekseev 2002, 57.

437 Alekseev 2002, 57–58.

438 Sterligova 1994, 50.

439 Karpov 2002, 4.

Byzantium and Danube Bulgaria, where some rulers were directly cast in the role of the Last Emperor/Tsar, no such allusions can be found in Kievan Rus'. I have already offered a hypothetical explanation for this 'omission'; namely that in the 11th–12th centuries, Kievan Rus' was not yet a legitimate tsardom/empire, and thus in no position to be able to claim such a role for its ruler. It would be able to do that, at least formally, only after the fall of Constantinople into Ottoman, i.e. Islamic—'Ismaelite'—hands in May 1453.

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In conclusion to the above-said in this chapter, let us attempt a quick summary. Firstly, it is obvious that right after the year 1000, 'two complete worlds'⁴⁴⁰ could be seen in a significant part of Europe. One was that of Christianity (with its centers in Constantinople and Rome) and the other one was the Islamic one (with centers in the southwesternmost part of the Continent, in Cordoba in Spain, and in the easternmost part, in the cities of Bolgar and Biliar along the Volga and Kama Rivers and west of the Ural Mountains). The second world, however, was rather small-sized compared to the first one, which in turn can also be divided into two parts: the Eastern Orthodox East (formally after the so-called Great Schism of 1054), which included the Bulgarians, Alans (Ases, Ossetians), Serbians and the Rus', under the spiritual domination of Byzantium; and the Catholic West. At the same time, in certain remote, peripheral parts of Europe along the Baltic Sea remained some 'pagan enclaves' where the still-unchristened Old Prussians and Yotvingians lived. Religion-wise, however, there was one other region in Europe, which at the time was the most non-homogeneous one from a confessional point of view. That was the world of the former *Pax Chazarica*, situated in the easternmost part of the Continent, near the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Azov. The local Christians, Muslims, Jews and pagans, who had generally co-existed peacefully within the Khazar Khaganate until the 960s, were joined by a new strong migratory wave of various tribes, invading from the Steppe East of Eurasia: the Pechenegs, the Uzes (together with the Oghuz) and the Cumans. All of them were pagans and thus quickly came into the view of the Christian Byzantines, Bulgarians and the Rus', to be identified by some as the new tribes of 'Gog and Magog' that had arrived to punish the sinful Christian 'chosen peoples' before the *End of Times*. They will be discussed in detail—both in texts and contexts—further on, in the following two chapters.

440 The term was coined by Kalin Ianakiev, although he gave different outlines to the two parts, see Ianakiev 2012, 150.

It is also obvious that, from the middle of the 10th century until the end of the 11th century, eschatological and especially apocalyptic expectations existed not only among the elite of Christian Europe, in connection with the so-called chiliasm (the year 1000, according to some, or 1033 as the sum of 1000 and the 33 years in the life of Jesus Christ, according to others; or in relation to the year 1092), but also in the circles of some of the most educated representatives of the Jewish population of the Caliphate of Cordoba, and, in particular, the personal counselor and a high-ranking official in the court of the caliph, Hasdai ben Shaprut. Thus, from Spain and further on through England, Francia and Germany (the Holy Roman Empire) and then through Bulgaria and Byzantium, all the way to the easternmost parts of Europe, from the Khazars near the Caspian Sea and north of the Caucasus, the ideas of the arrival of the Messiah (and the *End of the world*, respectively; and especially for the Christians—the Second Coming of Christ) were if not universally widespread, than at least well known to a certain circle of educated people. By the middle of this period, i.e. from the second half of the 11th century onwards, such notions would also gain popularity among some monastic circles in Kievan Rus'.

Topography of the *Evil Forces* before the *End of Times*: European Dimensions

The analysis of a subject such as the one of this chapter, along with several questions that have already been discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this book, needs to take into account an extremely important paradigm of the medieval man, be it a Christian or a Muslim. It is the civilizational space created by Alexander the Great and his successors. As was mentioned before, it was perceived as the space of civilization *par excellence*, a meta-space with transcultural and transchronological characteristics.¹ It was considered to be protected by a barrier/gate/barricade or by an iron wall from the ‘outer’ world,² i.e. from the so-called unclean peoples, known in the Old Testament as ‘Gog and Magog’. From a certain point onwards (specifically, from the 1st century AD, which will be discussed below), this name was given to the ethnic groups that inhabited the steppes (the so-called Scythian space), located north of the Caucasus and along the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Thus, for the three monotheistic religions, this space and, respectively, civilization, also formed a meta-space that separated ‘that which is ours’ from the ‘other’ by (not always) clear boundaries and/or barriers.

During the centuries known as Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, a number of natural (as in, created by nature) ‘signs’ on the earth’s surface were used to mark ‘boundaries’, including rivers, seas, mountains, etc. Here, I will limit myself to only one example, which has come down to us from a Byzantine author, Michael Psellos (the mid-11th century). He claimed that the mountains, rivers and passes formed natural boundaries, which were further reinforced by the man-built towns and strongholds.³ Of course, this point of view is typical for the classical antique tradition. Nevertheless, and regardless of the actual border situation, this viewpoint was shared by many learned men in Byzantium and the Christian world as a whole.

To this, however, something else can also be added: in Late Antiquity, another perception of the *boundary* existed as well. In his work “On the peace

1 See Shukurov 1999, 33–61.

2 Among the immense number of studies on the question of the wall/gate/barrier, see, for instance Ibn Khordadbeh 1986; Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 53–54.

3 Michaelis Pselli 1941, 239.

of Valens”, Themistius wrote the following: “What divides the Scythians and the Romans is not a river, nor a swamp, nor a wall [...] but fear ...”.⁴ It is clear from the above-said regarding the visions of the *boundary*, that they, as well as terms-and-notions such as ‘Holy/Promised/Sacred Land’, ‘fear of invaders’ before the coming of Antichrist and the Last Judgment, the ‘Second Coming of Christ’ and the like, often have a common literary (also rhetoric at times) foundation and probably also common historical (and maybe even ‘mental’) roots and reasons.

At the same time, and with all this in mind, my goal for this chapter is to focus on another, no less important in my opinion, question: the connection between the understanding of one’s *own* Holy Land (traditionally perceived by Christians as the ‘New Israel’) and the geographic locations of the invaders, called the ‘unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog’. According to some paradigmatic texts from the Holy Scripture (the Old Testament) and other sources, the latter were expected to attack this/these ‘New Israel(s)’, i.e. the new Christian kingdoms, in the *Last Times*, before the Second Coming. On the other hand, my interest here is also directed towards the *topos* of the ‘original’, i.e. initial Holy Land in the Middle East; it was there, as the Scriptures and tradition conveyed, that the attacks of the above-mentioned invaders would to actually take place.

The well-known *dictum* of St. Peter the Apostle (1 Pet. 2:9–10): “But you are a *chosen* race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were *not* a people, but now you are *God’s people ...*” was naturally directed at the early Christian communities. During the Middle Ages, however, also as a result of the Christianization processes of the so-called ‘newcomers’ in Europe (see above, Chapter 1), these words began to be perceived quite literary by the newly-converted ‘barbarians’ who began seeing themselves as the ‘new chosen ones, the ‘new people of God’. Thus, these ‘newcomers’ appropriated a new, fully Christian identity (which is especially true for the Frankish *case*) and even a new mission: to spread the new doctrine among the pagans “in the name of the Lord”. This view penetrated the minds of the Franks in particular, during the early years of the Carolingian rule.⁵ This sense of *choseness* could also be seen later also in other parts of Europe. One example is Bulgaria during the reign of Tsar Simeon (893–927), who presented himself (and was presented, according to the

4 Themistii 1965, 210–211 (10. 38), cited from Mattern 1999, 115.

5 See Garrison 2000, 114–161.

stable archetype) as a ‘new Moses’ and ‘new David’,⁶ and his people—as the ‘new chosen people’ in the western part/segment of the Christian *Oecumene* (the so-called *West*, from the Greek *Dysis*). Simeon left the eastern Romans (i.e. the Byzantines) to rule the eastern part/segment of this same *Oecumene* (Gr. *Anatole*), to which, according to him, they were entitled by presumption.⁷ In my opinion, all these examples with their connection to the ‘Gog and Magog’ peoples can be adequately perceived through the prism of the real and/or imaginary geography of both the Christian ‘new chosen peoples’/the ‘New Israel’ and the ‘unclean peoples’ invading their territories. At the same time, a parallel interpretation is also needed for other *cases* related to the history and geography—real and imaginary—of peoples that professed the other monotheistic religions during the Middle Ages. Such a comparative study can possibly reveal common matrices in the way of thinking of the pre-modern man, which had its roots in both the ancient archaic notions of the *center* and the *periphery*, and in the biblical metatext.

Who were all these invaders preceding the *End of Times* in reality? Were they pagans and polytheists in the narrow sense of the word, ‘labeled’ in the Holy Bible as the ‘unclean peoples Gog and Magog’? Were these invaders in the new ‘Promised Lands’ always presented as invading them according to the archetypal direction of the impending “punishment for committed sins”, as given in the Old Testament, i.e. the North, regardless of their presence in specific texts (or historical contexts) (see Gen. 10:2), or not? All these questions are very important with regard to the subject matter of Chapter 2, since they are directly connected to the medieval notion of the real (and/or imaginary) sacred geography of the ‘chosen people’ and its Promised Land.⁸

Furthermore, there is also another question which could be raised as to the spread of the above-mentioned phenomenon of invading in/from the Promised Land: was this perception typical only for the Christian peoples, or was it also popular among the Muslims, in particular in Volga Bulgaria, between the 950s and the 1230s? If so, what kind of notions could have kept it alive among the Muslim Bulgars? And could the answers be sought not only in the biblical archetypes, but also in Alexander the Great’s paradigm of the ‘ideal ruler’ and creator of a civilizational space, i.e. in the common heritage of both worlds, that of the Cross and that of the Crescent? Because it would hardly be a

6 Rashev 2007, 9–31, 60–72, 97–104; Biliarsky 2010, 255–277; on the Byzantine model that was at the base of the Bulgarian visions in particular, see also Rapp 2010, 175–197.

7 See more in Shepard 1991, 9–48; Shepard 2003, 339–358; Stepanov S.a., 122–129; Stepanov 2007b, 197–204; Nikolov 2000, 135–145; Nikolov 2006; Vachkova 2005.

8 Among the numerous studies of the ‘chosen peoples’, see, for instance, Burrige 1969; Davies 1982; Nicholson 1988; Hastings 1999, 381–396; Hastings 2003, 25–54; Novak 1995; Smith 2003.

coincidence that the erudite Bulgars along the Volga and Kama Rivers believed Alexander the Great to have established a number of towns in Volga Bulgaria, although the Macedonian ruler had never actually reached the Volga River in his campaigns. What could be the reason behind such a geographical 'distortion' by the learned men of the Volga Bulgars?

As the above-said indicates, one of my intentions for this chapter will be to explore in detail areas of historical knowledge that have yet to be fully illuminated in a comparative aspect. Another goal is to search the various sources stemming from various parts of Europe, for archetypal markers of 'our' Holy Land and of 'us', perceived as 'the chosen people', and the like. For example, the Caucasus Mountains, which were seen as the 'wall'/'barrier'/'boundary' *par excellence*, as well as the Danube River, which is the same type of 'boundary'; or 'our' saints, 'our' holy mountains, etc. Intriguing also is the prototype of the 'unclean' invading peoples, known from the Bible and the *Apocalypse* of the Syrian Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, and their medieval names-and-images in the period up to the end of the 12th century (Magyars, Pechenegs, Cumans, i.e. the 'peoples of the steppe' as a whole, but also the Normans or the so-called blonde-beards/men with blonde beards, best known from Byzantine works and the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic sources of this time).

Behind this level of interpretation lies the well-known idea of the 'center' ('core'), which became especially popular thanks to the works of Mircea Eliade and his school⁹ and its representations in various cultures and places, mainly in Europe and the Mediterranean region as a whole, namely the holy mountains, palaces, temples, etc. In the Christian era, the latter were further developed and sometimes replaced by the concept of the sacred—and hence 'holy'—mountain-and-land, inhabited by a 'chosen people'.

This same notion (of the 'center', 'core', 'middle') can also be seen explicitly stated in the Old Testament, in particular in two verses by Ezekiel: "Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her" (Ez. 5:5); and also: "... and the people who were gathered from the nations ..., who live at the *center of the world*" (Italics mine—*Author's note*) (Ez. 38:12). According to Adriaan Bredero, 'center' was given as *umbilicus*, or 'navel', in these verses in the Latin *Vulgata*, and "this word was taken literally and led to the conviction that Jerusalem was at the navel of the world".¹⁰ Bredero asserts that "this cosmological concept of salvation was of Jewish origin" and that it was introduced to Christianity by Hegesippus,

9 For the so-called *Axis mundi*, *omphalos* and the like, see, for instance, Eliade 1995, 408–429.

10 Bredero 1994, 96.

a second-century Christian anti-heretical writer, who was in reality a convert from Judaism. St. Jerome borrowed some ideas from Hegesippus in his commentary on Ezekiel,¹¹ which was carefully copied during the Middle Ages with the diligence such texts exacted.¹²

Being in the ‘center’ in principle or itself being seen as the ‘center’ of the world, this holy land was perceived by the erudite men of the monotheistic religions as inhabited by ‘us’ who lived at the heart of the civilized world. Moreover, it was believed that this Sacred/Holy Land was surrounded by various enemies, which by definition were considered to be pagans or infidels. The same belief can be found with regard to the city of Jerusalem, which was thought to remain the center of the messianic kingdom until the *End of Times*.¹³ For the *Book of Revelation* of St. John (20:7–9) literally predicted that the destruction of this final kingdom would take place in Jerusalem: “And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations that are at *the four corners of the earth* (Italics mine—*Author’s note*), Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and *the beloved city* (Italics mine—*Author’s note*) ...” Naturally, this ‘beloved city’ could not be anything else than Jerusalem.

The Muslims also had a perception of the *End of Times*,¹⁴ which understandably was not directly connected to the Second Coming of Christ, since for them, Jesus was not the Son of God, but a mere prophet. Just like the Jews and Christians, however, they too shared the notion of a ‘sacred land’. So, in the present chapter, the point of departure is the common pre-modern perception that everyone sees his ‘own’ *homeland* as the ‘center’ of the world, i.e. as a sacred land (which would subsequently become Holy Land in Christianity), marked by its holy cities, holy mountains and holy places that preserved ‘its’ (i.e. the homeland’s) relics, cathedrals, temples and other sacred objects, and which thus bore the signs of God Almighty. The Christians in particular believed that all these places/cities/mountains served as markers of God’s presence.

It is then evident that in this chapter, I shall attempt to conduct at least two separate levels of research. The first one would be the Christian world from the mid-10th century up to the end of the 12th century, including both Western

11 See *Commentariorum in Ezechielem* 2.5, in: *Patrologia Latina* xxv, 52.

12 Bredero 1994, 96.

13 Bredero 1994, 98.

14 The literature on this topic is immense, see, for instance, Cook 1996, 66–104; Cook 2002; Arjomand 1998, 238–283. For a general overview of Islamic eschatology, see Waldman 1987, 152–156.

and Eastern Europe (i.e. the Byzantines, Bulgarians, and after the 1030s, also the Rus'). In this world, the faithful and especially (mainly) the educated men lived in anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ around the year 1000 or 1033 (or 992 and 1092, in the parts of Europe influenced by the Byzantine civilization), along with the learned Jewry that inhabited the same territories and also waited for the arrival of the Messiah during the 10th century (the Jews of the Byzantine Empire were heavily influenced by these messianic expectations also around the First Crusade in the late 11th century, which shall be discussed below).

Next, the second level of analysis will concern the world of Islam and, in particular, the part of it located at the easternmost side of the European continent, namely the lands where the Volga Bulgars had established a state in the 9th–10th centuries. It existed until the first half of the 13th century when it fell under the pressure of Mongolian attacks. In addition to the above-said, I will also try to present the issue of the 'invasion' in/from the Sacred/Holy Land, again in a comparative perspective.

A correlative research of this kind could show the existence of a common cultural matrix in this aspect, namely the three Abrahamic religions and their respective Holy Scriptures; which in their Christian and Muslim versions were actually modeled after the Old Testament. The latter also implies that the written sources could reveal similar—at least to a certain degree and extent—ideas about the 'invasion in/from the Sacred/Holy Land', regardless of the specific details that each one of the three traditions was bound to have. It can be presumed with some certainty that one and the same central idea, namely that of the Holy Land seen as the 'center' of the world, would be traceable in each one of the Holy Scriptures that have emerged from the Old Testament.

The *literati* in all said communities had their own ideas about the real and/or imagined sacred geography of their own 'Sacred/Holy Lands'. It is quite possible that terms such as *time*, *space*, and *memory* were also perceived through the prism of the existing notions about the Second Coming and the *End of the world*, and the Messianic Kingdom. These ideas can also be studied on the level of the real/imagined geography, as well as on that of concepts such as 'chosen people', 'holy places', 'unclean invading peoples' and the like.¹⁵ Some of these relations will be analyzed in more detail below.

Also, special attention should certainly be paid to the specific interdependence between the various ideologemae of the 'chosen kingdom' of Alexander the Great, with its typical trans-cultural spaces and heritages, and the concepts of *Axis mundi*, the 'Sacred/Holy Land', Messianism and apocalypticism,

15 See Stepanov 2011a, 148–163.

etc., since the latter can easily be recognized as inherent to the thinking of many of the learned men of the Early Middle Ages. Most likely, the roots of many of these concepts are to be sought in various common, essentially archetypal, ideas that were characteristic for the monotheistic religions in the Mediterranean region and were further developed during the Middle Ages, according to the specific 'needs' of the various ethno-cultural communities.

The 'sacred' geography of the 'chosen people' and its 'Sacred/Holy Land' had by presumption its *own* 'sacred places', laden with 'sacred memory'. During the Middle Ages, the Christian world did its best to transform the land of Israel into a true Christian 'Holy Land'.¹⁶ As regards Byzantium, the program, sponsored by the emperors themselves, to turn Palestine into a Holy Land for the 'new chosen people', i.e. the Byzantines, became possible through a dense network of monasteries and sacred sites, dominated by huge basilicas. This endeavor "can perhaps be seen as a creation of a new promised land" for the new 'people of God', centered, however, in Constantinople.¹⁷

From as early as the 6th century BC, Ancient Israel had preserved the memory of the specific direction from which the 'unclean peoples' of Gog and Magog were expected to invade this 'Sacred/Holy Land'; in the Old Testament it is the North. Keeping this notion in mind, I think it would be fitting to wonder whether it was typical for all these traditions in the Christian medieval kingdoms and empires to follow the archimodel of the direction of invasion into the 'Sacred/Holy Land', i.e. the North. It must be said that this direction would later become permanently associated with specific ethnic groups that inhabited the North: the nomads living north of the Caucasus and around the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Or maybe not? If the second assumption is true, what were the likely reasons for a subsequent manipulation of the real geography? Why, for example, in a text from Kievan Rus' (*sub anno* 1096) that came from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery near the capital at the time, Kiev, were the Cumans who had invaded Rus' mainly from the south and south-east, called by the anonymous author 'Gog and Magog' or 'Ishmaelites'? Why did the Byzantines in the 11th century, and even later, prior to the date crucial for them, 13 April 1204, perceive as their greatest threat not so much the *North*, as the *West*, although it was the northern direction that was called 'terrible' before the *End of Times* in the archetypal biblical text?

It is also interesting to see how the Magyar nomads who attacked Western Europe in the course of the 10th century from the east (the direction connected to the so-called Pontic steppes), were perceived as a threat and a punishment

16 See more in Wilken 1992, chs. 5–10.

17 The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 13; for further details, see Wilken 1992, 143–192.

before the *End of the world*: did the Latin chronicles mark them as the 'unclean peoples' who invaded the Holy Land from the archetypal North, or did they adhere to the actual geographical direction of the Magyar invasion, the East.

Another question that could be considered relevant in such a comparative study is that of the possible perspectives concerning the Holy Land in the discussed time period: whether they were one or two. At this point, the following hypothesis could be put forward. Firstly, the perspective that existed in the *case* of Western Europe was twofold: the first one was typical for the years between roughly 950 and the beginning of the First Crusade in 1095/1096 (and can be briefly presented as follows: 'our' Christian kingdoms were the 'New Israel', i.e. the 'new Holy Land', and they were being attacked by various invaders, mainly by Normans and Magyars. Such a notion should, quite understandably, be typical for the Ottonian Empire, which after the 960s renovated the Christian empire of Western Europe after the Carolingians). The second perspective of the *West* could be seen as valid for the years between the First Crusade and presumably 1200 (in April 1204, the knights of the Fourth Crusade, together with the Venetians, plundered the 'center of the world' Constantinople) and can be defined as follows: the Holy Land is in Palestine and it should be conquered by 'us', i.e. by the Western Christian world. Let me illustrate this with an example. In the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-William Godellus, dated to the early 12th century, it is said that "in the year of the Lord 1009, with the permission of God, the unclean Turks invaded the lands of Jerusalem and captured Jerusalem ... This happened under Kings Basil and Constantine of the Greeks (the Byzantines—*Author's note*), under Emperor Henry of the Romans (of the Holy Roman Empire—*Author's note*), and in the eleventh year of King Robert of the Franks. In that same year, many Jews were baptized on account of fear."¹⁸ Of course, worth mentioning here is also the opinion of Bernard McGinn, one of the most renowned scholars in the field of apocalypticism, who writes that "if apocalyptic motifs were used [in the First Crusade], they do not seem to have played a major role."¹⁹

Secondly, in the *case* of Byzantium (and Danube Bulgaria, see below, Chapter 3), 'our' empires were viewed as the 'Sacred/Holy Land' *par excellence*. Therefore, 'we', i.e. the Byzantines (and the Bulgarians), were the ones who were attacked by various invaders prior to the *End of Times*. In this case, the perspective of the 'Holy Land' is obviously only a single one. And as regards the Byzantine view in particular, some time ago Evelyne Patlagean proposed

18 Cited from: *The Apocalyptic Year 1000*, 338; on the events in 1009/1010, see Landes 1996, 79–112; Callahan 2008, 41–57.

19 McGinn 1994, 121.

the term 'Dual Holy Land' for it.²⁰ In my opinion, however, the same can also be said about the Bulgarians, and it can be seen clearly in the phrase 'Mezina Land' (*Mezina zemia* in Bulgarian), known from a Bulgarian apocalyptic text entitled *Vision of the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times* (*Videnie na prorok Isaiia za poslednite vremena*) and dated to the second half of the 13th century. This text will be discussed at length later on in the book, especially in Chapter 3, which is why I shall only mention a specific passage from it here:

They will come to the river, which is called 'the hidden paradise'; this river flows through the land of Israel, called 'Mezina Land'. There, the rod from the root of Jesse shall flourish. And this I will tell you, which will happen in the last times. It is not me who is speaking, but the Holy Spirit ... And lo, a sign is given, not by me, but by the Holy Spirit! When you see the end of the Tsardom in Mezina Land, afterwards no other tsar shall come from the same house.²¹

It is clear that *Mezina* is quite close phonetically to *Moesia*, i.e. the territory that was the center/heart/core of both the First and especially the Second Bulgarian Empire. *Mezina* could also be derived from the Greek *mesos*, meaning 'center', 'core', i.e. the land which was 'in the center' and was 'the core' of the Bulgarian Empire. In this way the Bulgarians, just like the Byzantines, 'doubled' the Holy Land: the first one was naturally the ancient land of Israel, the original *Promised Land* of the Jews, which would later become the Promised Land for Christianity as a whole; the second 'Holy Land' was the one of the Bulgarian Tsardom, since Bulgaria became a legitimate Christian empire after November 927 and once again in 1235, which meant that the Bulgarian people had become 'a chosen people' with a mission before the *End of the world*.²²

Let us return to the Byzantium case. The Byzantines viewed their empire as a 'kingdom of Christians' by presumption and, in contrast to the West, it could be assumed that the Byzantine perspective on the Holy Land was a single one. The lands of 'our' empire were perceived by the Byzantines as the Promised Land *par excellence*, although it was well known also in the Christian East that a paradigmatic Promised Land existed in the Near East. Such a notion, of 'our land' and 'our chosen people' as marked by holiness, is associated with the so-called laws of holiness, which were typical for the Jews and the covenant

20 Patlagean 1998, 112–126.

21 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 237–238.

22 For more details, see Stepanov S.a., 122–129; Stepanov 2007b, 108–118, as well as Chapter 3 of this book.

they made with God.²³ They required the Jews to live, both ethically and ritually, in separation and exclusion from the other peoples, as they were 'holy', because God himself was 'holy' (see Lev. 19:2); and, as is said in the Third Book of Moses, "You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord and holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you shall be mine" (Lev. 20:26).

This separation from the rest of the world, in this case from the 'barbarians', was also found in the Roman Empire, but as a real, physical division, realized by raising walls along the *limes*, i.e. the border. The latter is especially evident along the so-called Rhine-Danube border that protected the Roman *civitas* from the Germans, Sarmatians and other 'barbarians' that lived to the north and east of it. After Christianity became the 'state' religion of the Empire in the 4th century, this notion gradually merged with the ancient Jewish vision of the separation of the 'chosen people'. According to Byzantine beliefs, the Christian (Byzantine) *Oecumene* was perceived as limited both territorially, by the Danube River in the west, for instance, and also imaginarily, i.e. as a confined community that professed, observed and preserved the purity of the Christian faith in anticipation of the Salvation. This concept can also be seen among the medieval Byzantines.

In short, the Byzantine concept can be summarized as follows: 1) 'we' (i.e. the Byzantines) are being attacked by invaders (Magyars, Pechenegs, Cumans, Saracens, etc.) from *the outside* (i.e. by people living outside the borders of the *Oecumene*), and 'we' strive only to protect the Christian faith in this 'our' *new* Promised Land (i.e. the *Oecumene*); 2) the latter is limited by clear topographic borders (like the Danube River to the west and northwest, or, after the so-called Byzantine Reconquista, the Euphrates River in the east); 3) 'we' inhabit the *Oecumene*, anticipating in a morally ethical Christian 'purity' to fulfill our salvational mission on Judgment Day. For instance, it is hardly coincidental that the basileus John Tzimiskes (969–976) stopped his armies just a few tens of kilometers from Jerusalem (after capturing Tiberias, Nazareth and Caesarea); his famous successor, Basil II (976–1025), too, did not show any visible interest in actually capturing the Holy Land.²⁴ It can be thus surmised that, during the period following the 10th–11th centuries, the *East* obviously managed to hold back, to a much higher degree than the *West*, its aggressive appetites towards the initial Promised Land, remaining far more enclosed within itself. Khristo Matanov expresses a similar-sounding viewpoint, although regarding an earlier period of the Byzantine history. In a study on the idea of the *City* and the divine chosenness of the Byzantines, he writes the following: the *chosen*

23 Smith 2003, 59.

24 Ostrogorsky 1984, 295–315 and esp. 297, 314.

(Byzantine) people were being convinced that they “could not be scattered or ousted and should stay in their place and protect their God-given lands. This created additional incentives in their fight against the barbarian world ...”²⁵

Thirdly, the *case* of the Muslim Bulgars living along the Volga and Kama Rivers can be presumably presented at the ideologemic level as follows: ‘our’ lands are the ‘Holy Land’ and since ‘we’ are Muslims, we should attack both the infidels and especially the pagans surrounding us (the idea of *jihad*). And here, again, only a single perspective can be seen.

Fourthly, as regards the attitude towards the ‘invaders’, shown by the Jews of Cordoba and the Khazar Jewish élite in the 10th century, the perspective in this case remains virtually unknown, due to a lack of sufficient information in this aspect. Still, it could be presumed with some level of certainty that all of the above-mentioned peoples had a perception of their own Sacred/Holy Land, although their specific strategies for ‘dealing’ with the invaders in it were probably different. The direction of these invasions seemingly also varied. In some cases it was based on the metatext, i.e. the biblical *topoi*, as well as the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, but in others it evidently did not follow the archimodel direction, i.e. *North*. It is this assumption that I shall try to justify with a number of examples below.

Let us first sum up the above-said. As a rule, a study of this kind includes numerous thematic circles. First, eschatology and apocalypticism, initially among the Jews, followed later by the Christians and the Muslims. Second, the concepts of the ‘chosen kingdom’ and the ‘chosen people’. Third, the ‘unclean peoples’ (of) Gog and Magog (or Yajuj and Majuj in the Arabic-Persian written tradition), which were destined to become the invaders *par excellence* in the Sacred/Holy Land. Fourth, the legends about the deeds of Alexander the Great and the ‘unclean peoples’ of the North, shut off—by his order—behind a wall/barrier. Fifth, the traditions of the ‘people of the Book’, i.e. the Jews, Christians and Muslims, where these and other motifs can be easily recognized. And sixth, the geographical knowledge in the medieval Christian and Muslim world (the concepts of ‘the seven climes’, the so-called ‘*Tau*-maps’ and T—O maps, etc.). On the following pages, however, I would like to primarily focus on the question of the ‘Sacred/Holy Land’ and the real and/or imaginary geography of the ‘chosen people’ and their ‘chosen kingdom’, which were directly linked to the notions of the invaders, expected to attack before the *End of the world* and known from the Old Testament as the ‘unclean peoples’ Gog and Magog. Thus, we could also reveal the medieval ‘legacy’ and the interpretations of the deeds

25 Matanov 2002, 60.

of Alexander the Great in this aspect, as well as some 'monotheistic' features that were attributed *post mortem* to this heroic figure.

2.1 The Question of the Sources

There are many sources which can give information on the problems, stated above. Naturally, some kind of selection needs to be made for a study of this kind, in order to find and identify the most emblematic and 'expressive' issues among them, and also to avoid the lesser details, which sometimes tend to either 'obscure' the message or prevent its essence from getting through. Driven by these concerns, I have made the following selection:

- 1) from Byzantium and Kievan Rus': mainly chronicles, prophecies, 'visions', etc.
- 2) from Volga Bulgaria: mainly the travels of the 12th-century Andalusian merchant and traveler Abu Hamid al-Garnati, as well as the account of Najib al-Hamadani;
- 3) from the Jewish milieu: the correspondence between the khagan-bek of Khazaria Joseph and Hasdai ibn/ben Shaprut, a high-ranked dignitary at the court of the Caliph of Cordoba, dating to the mid-10th century (prior to 965). In addition, some letters from the Cairo *Genizah* dated mainly to the end of the 11th century;
- 4) from Western Europe: mainly, the 'classic' letter (treatise) of Adso of Montier-en-Der, the so-called *Letter on the Hungarians*, the Anglo-Saxons Ælfric and Wulfstan (the late 10th–early 11th century), Benzo of Alba, Thietland, et al.

Since these and other sources that have yet to be mentioned belong to different genres of the medieval literary tradition, they also require specific treatment, i.e. a careful selection of the various approaches and scientific methodology. The latter is especially true for the so-called *topoi* and *clichés*, as well as for some paradigmatic expressions from the Holy Scripture. It is also worth noting that such notions can be found first and foremost in the Old and New Testament, and especially in St. John's *Apocalypse*.

Alongside these pivotal testimonies, however, it is also necessary to pay special attention to a text from the early 8th century, which became truly emblematic for the whole of Christian Europe; it is known to scholars as the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. Taking into account the changes that occurred in the Middle East following the Arab victories after the 630s, this text modified a number of old clichés and *topoi*, which were well known from both

the Old and the New Testament and which from then on permanently entered the apocalyptic and eschatological works in both parts of Christian Europe. And lastly, I would like to stress that the information regarding the invaders in the Holy Land should be studied in a comparative perspective (i.e. as a comparison between the West and the East, the North and the South) with the hope that such mutual views, alongside the methods of classical hermeneutics and the history of mentalities, will provide a more adequate view of this phenomenon.

2.2 Genealogy of Some of the *Topoi*

It seems necessary to note from the very onset that a number of the realia mentioned below have a mutual connection and dependence. This truly important statement is also the basis of another prerequisite for an adequate analysis: we need to be well-acquainted with these specific characteristics and mutual dependencies between the individual *topoi*, motifs and their genealogy, in order to be able to clarify and, if possible, to adequately interpret the various ‘innovations’ that have appeared over time in some texts, along with their new meanings and messages. Here are some of these ‘common places’ and motifs.

2.2.1 *The ‘People (of) Gog and Magog’ in the Old Testament*

The location of these people(s) on the geographical map is in the north. It is, however, necessary, to specify that in *Genesis* (10:2), ‘Magog’ denotes only a geographical entity, with no apocalyptic messages or nuances whatsoever. Still, even before the so-called Babylonian captivity of the Jews, the motif of the apocalyptic anticipation, combined with the idea of an enemy invasion from the north, can be found in the *Book of Jeremiah*. Jeremiah predicted that the terror and fear would come from the north. Here are the specific texts: Jer. 4:6: “Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not, for I bring disaster from the north, and great destruction”, as well as Jer. 6:1: “Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin, from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and raise a signal on Beth-haccherem, for disaster looms out of the north, and great destruction”. During the 6th century BC, such ideas also appeared in the *Book of Zechariah* (Zech. 13–14) and the *Book of Joel* (Joel 1:6, 2:20), with the latter stating explicitly the imminent arrival of the enemy from the north (cf. 2:20: “I will remove the northerner far from you, and drive him into a parched and desolate land, his vanguard into the eastern sea, and his rear

guard into the western sea; the stench and foul smell of him will rise, for he has done great things").²⁶

Nonetheless, the basis of the subsequent tradition of the 'unclean peoples' that invaded the Holy Land from the north, in the form that can be found among the Christians and Muslims, draws its roots mainly from the prophecy of Ezekiel (Ez. 37, 38). According to it, Gog would be at the head of the Evil Forces coming from the north, sent by God Himself to punish the Jews in the *Last Times*. Flavius Josephus in the 1st century AD would be the first one to associate these 'unclean peoples Gog and Magog' with a specific ethnic group from the North that could be historically outlined on the map: the Scythians, or, more specifically, the historically attested at the time Alans. He found the latter to be the most suitable among the tribes which would fulfill the biblical prophecy about the 'unclean peoples' that would invade the sacred land of the Jews from the north.²⁷ According to Alexander Podosinov, however, the *North* was also seen by the ancient Jews as a habitat of the gods. He 'deciphers' this notion as a replica and an influence on Judaism by some very ancient south Eurasian (Babylonian, Iranian, Indian, etc.) perceptions concerning the existence of a country and a sacred mountain (*cf.* for example, the sacred Mount Meru), the dwelling place of the God/deities. This was the basis for the Jewish vision of the 'high' north and the 'low' south.²⁸

Against this background, the ancient Jews perceived the *West* as a beneficial direction. Often, the West was denoted with the words 'sea land', with the word *yam* meaning primarily 'sea', but also 'west'. This direction had a similar designation among the Canaanites in the 14th century BC, but even more interesting for the topic at hand is the information that can be gleaned from Hesychius (*Hes.* 48.34), who describes the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem 'from the side of the sea' (*ta pros talassan*).²⁹

2.2.2 *The Revelation of St. John the Apostle and the 'People of the Evil Forces' in the New Testament*

A thorough depiction of Gog and Magog can be found only in St. John's *Book of Revelation*—the most difficult to interpret part of the New Testament (Rev. 20:7). In it, these peoples are linked to another important theme, this

26 See also Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 4–5.

27 *Bellum Judaicum* VII: 7, 4; XVIII: 4, 4; Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 9.

28 See Podosinov 1999, 198, 215, 542–543, 545–546.

29 Podosinov 1999, 199; on the meaning given by the Jews to geographical directions, see in general Podosinov 1999, 197–207.

one concerning the Messianic kingdom of the thousandth year. God Himself would cast Gog and Magog against it, as a punishment for the chosen Jewish people, but the ‘unclean peoples’ would be eventually defeated by the ‘radiant, heavenly host of God’ before the Second Coming.

During the 5th century, the Fathers of the Christian Church (especially St. Jerome and later Isidore of Seville, who died in 636) would become the most influential interpreters of the ‘Gog and Magog’ motif, associating this ‘final evil’ either with the notorious Huns or with the Goths who were also well known in the Late Antiquity.³⁰ Isidore of Seville, for instance, wrote the following: “*Filii igitur Iaphet septem nominantur: Gomer, ex quo Galatae, id est Galli. Magog, a quo arbitrantur Scythas et Gothos traxisse originem*”.³¹ Shortly after these words the scholar adds: “*Gothi a Magog filio Iaphet nominati putantur, de similitudine ultimae syllabae, quos veteres magis Getas quam Gothos vocaverunt*”.³²

It should also be noted that the St. John’s *Revelation* was not that popular in Byzantium. Nevertheless, the notion of Gog and Magog as being the ‘wicked peoples’ before the *End of Times* was known well enough to the Byzantines. Here, I shall cite only one source: Theodore, the *synkellos* of the Great Church of Constantinople, who wrote a homily to commemorate the failed siege of the city by the joint forces of the Avars and the Persians in 626. In the homily, Theodore demonstrated that some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the fate of Jerusalem and ancient Israel had found their realization, though not in the history of Israel, but in that of the besieged Constantinople. The author pays special attention to passages from the prophets Isaiah, Zechariah and Ezekiel, but “most remarkable is his discussion of the prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog. This prophecy was never fulfilled, says Theodore, with respect to the original people of Israel [...] Nor can the prophecy ever apply to the Jews in future, since they are scattered all over the world and no longer have a country to call their own”.³³ Thus, Theodore *synkellos* was rather inclined to see this prophecy fulfilled in view of the unfortunate fate of the Avars under the walls of Constantinople in 626. In his eyes, the metropolitan topography of Constantinople was even more appropriate to the prophetic description of Ezekiel, since it mentioned islands, with the prophet also explicitly stating that Gog’s burial place was “by the sea”. This is why Theodore understandably interpreted ‘Gog’ as the gathering of the various peoples led by the Avar khagan against the Byzantines. “I have learned from others”, adds

30 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 12–14; Aerts 2011, 30.

31 *Etymologiae* 1X, 2, 26–27.

32 *Etymologiae* 1X, 2, 89.

33 The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 16.

the homily's author, "that the name Gog signifies a multitude and assembly of nations. And rightly have I interpreted the land of Israel to be this city, in which God and the Virgin are piously glorified and all mysteries of pious devotion are performed". To be a true Israel, continues the *synkellos*, means to glorify the Lord with an open heart and a willing soul; and to inhabit the land of Israel without deceit means to offer pure and bloodless sacrifices to God in every place. "What else but that is this city, which one would not be wrong to call in its entirety a sanctuary of God?"³⁴

2.2.3 *The Wall/Gate of Alexander the Great*

2.2.3.1 In the Jewish Milieu before the Birth of Christ

The notion of the barrier/wall was still not present in the work of prophet Ezekiel. The first to perceive the legend of the so-called gate/wall of the famous Macedonian ruler as the barrier that would stop the peoples of Magog (the northern barbarians) was Flavius Josephus, which also meant the Hellenized circles of the Jewry. Flavius Josephus maintained that Alexander the Great erected an iron gate south of the Caspian Sea to keep out the Alans, who were of Scythian origins. While the Romano-Jewish scholar associated the contemporary Alans with Magog, he was hardly seeking to make any direct allusions with apocalypticism. It is quite unlikely that he actually expected the Alans to invade from the distant north, from the 'Scythian space', in order to fulfill the role of the main character in the eschatological wars.³⁵ The discussion as to where exactly Alexander the Great built this gate is a discussion with a very long history and will not be a particular subject of investigation at this moment in the text.³⁶

2.2.3.2 In the World of Christendom

The so-called *Legend of Alexander (Romance of Alexander)* was initially created in a Greek-speaking milieu (the so-called Pseudo-Callisthenes which has been lost), probably in the 3rd century, and it is the primary text that preceded the 'apocalyptic' Alexander. According to Bernard McGinn, the Syriac versions of the legend that were based on the lost Greek original constitute the earliest evidence of the spread and, above all, the fusion of Alexander's *Legend*

34 The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 16–17.

35 See Flavius Josephus' *The Jewish War*, or *Bellum Judaicum*, VII: 7, 4; XVIII: 4, 4; see also Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 10.

36 On the varying opinions on this subject, see Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 10–11 and n. 18–23; Ibn Khordadbeh 1986, 43–46; Perevalov 2005, 173–180. For specific visions on the location see here, below.

into classical apocalypticism. A Latin translation emerged in the 10th century, made by a Neapolitan priest.³⁷

The story about the wall/gate built by Alexander the Great in the Caucasus to stop the barbarians that were invading from the north into the world of civilization, created by this same Macedonian ruler, underwent—after the concretization of Flavius Josephus—a further development in some of the works of the Church Fathers, but also of some secular authors.

When the Huns succeeded in penetrating south of the Caucasian ridge in 395 and invaded the civilized world of the Near East, the legend took on some new, apocalyptic aspects. Thus, the ‘excluded’ (from the civilized world) barbarians were identified as the ‘peoples Gog and Magog’ from the prophecies of Ezekiel and St. John’s *Revelation*. This can be clearly seen in a text known as the *Syrian Christian Legend Concerning Alexander* and ascribed to the Syrian writer Jacob of Serugh/Sarug (c. 451–521). His work contained the phrase, “this great gate [...] shall be closed until the *End of Times* cometh”; the latter had already been prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 1:14) in his well-known words that “out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land”. Jacob also stated that the peoples of Agog (*sic*) and Magog, being the fiercest of all creatures, would come together; they were of the mighty house of Japheth. Later in the text, the Syrian author also mentioned the “wise king Alexander, the son of Philip”, as well as some the prophecies of Jeremiah, Isaiah and Daniel. In his words, Alexander the Great himself had predicted that Rome would fall and that the cities and villages would be desolated; and all this would happen “before the coming of the sinful people of the children of Magog”. “They shall not, however,” continued Jacob, “enter into Jerusalem, the city of the Lord. For the sign (the True Cross—*Author’s note*) of the Lord would drive them away from it, and they shall not enter it”.³⁸

How should we interpret these passages? It seems that Jacob of Serugh considered it to be impossible for ‘unclean peoples’ to enter Jerusalem and the Holy Land as a whole, which had this city as its center. Its possession of the True Cross, a special sign that implied that the city was under the protection of God, did not allow for such a scenario. This interpretation is further confirmed by another statement of Jacob, namely that the peoples of Gog and Magog would not be able to reach “Mount Sinai”, for this mountain was “the dwelling place of the Lord”.³⁹ It can be thus concluded that for Jacob of Serugh, the mountain of Sinai and the city of Jerusalem were visible signs of the

37 McGinn 1979b, 56.

38 McGinn 1979b, 56–58.

39 McGinn 1979b, 58.

perception of the world 'center', the most sacred place on earth. In his eyes, it seemed that with the end of the atrocities caused by the tribes of Agog and Magog, in the times of weeping "shall Antichrist rise upon the whole earth"; "through that gate (*sic*) shall go forth and come that rebel [...]. These things which I have spoken shall come to pass before the End of the world". "These beautiful things", continued Jacob, were interpreted by Alexander the Great.⁴⁰

By the end of the 7th century, the motif of the gate/wall, along with that of Gog and Magog became well known mainly due to the above-mentioned Flavius Josephus, St. Jerome and Isidore of Seville. Later, after Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara's work had been translated first into Greek and then, during the first decades of the 8th century, into Latin as well, the Syriac tradition would become the most authoritative one with regard to the apocalyptic associations of the above-mentioned motifs.⁴¹ It is, however, worth pointing out that in the visions of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, the battle between Alexander the Great and the 'unclean peoples' occurred not in the north, but in the east!⁴² Obviously, in this case the author adhered to the actual endpoints of the geographical map that Alexander the Great and his armies reached during his eastward campaign. They were the lands of present-day Tadjikistan and North India, which for a Syrian such as Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, would be indeed located in the east and not in the north.

The influence of this Syriac text, most likely written in the 690s, on Western Europe was truly impressive. Besides its Latin translation which was completed before to the 730s, the text was also translated into several of the so-called vernacular languages, including Middle English. According to Bernard McGinn, Adso of Montier-en-Der could have been familiar with the Latin version of the text.⁴³

Also worth mentioning is another passage from Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypse* concerning Alexander the Great, who is described as having reached "the sea which is called the region of the sun", where "he beheld unclean races (*sic!*) of horrible appearance". He led these 'unclean races' away from the East (*sic*), restraining them with threats until they entered the northern lands (*sic*), from which there was no way either in or out "from East to West". Then, by God's command, two mountains came together and it was only then that Alexander the Great managed to erect a bronze (or iron, according to other versions) gate there. These 'concealed behind the gate' tribes were 22

40 McGinn 1979b, 59.

41 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 14.

42 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 28.

43 McGinn 1979b, 72-73.

in number (a Bulgarian version mentions “24 tsars”, while in the Greek ones, according to Anastasios Lolos, the various peoples were between 18 and 23). Among them were not only imaginary peoples (including Gog and Magog, Anog and Ageg, Dephar, etc.), but also real tribes known from historical works, such as the Alans, Sarmatians (called *Zarmatae* in the text) and the Lybians (*Libii* in the text).⁴⁴

2.2.3.3 In the Muslim World before the 10th Century

The same Syriac tradition from the late 7th century that was discussed above was also present in the Islamic sources. This is why some of them give contradictory indications of the location of the wall/gate built against Gog and Magog: according to some authors, these tribes were to be found in the east, while others pointed north. Since this issue has been presented in detail in the book of E. Van Donzel and A. Schmidt,⁴⁵ the analysis below is based mainly on their conclusions.⁴⁶

The topic of the wall and the tribes of Gog and Magog is well-developed in the Islamic written tradition, i.e. in the *hadiths*. Among the collections of the Sunni branch of Islam, for example, it can be found in the *Six Books*, a compilation from the 9th century. The names of the compilers are al-Bukhari († 870), Ibn Madja († 887), Muslim († 875), Abu Dawud († 888), al-Tirmidhi († 892), al-Nasa’i († 915). Two more significant traditions emerged before the 10th century: that of al-Tayalisi († 819) and of Ahmad ibn Hanbal († 855).

Among the Shi’ite compilations, the largest and probably the most influential one was the so-called “Seas of Lights” (*Bihar al-Anwar*). It is the work of the scholar al-Majlisi († 1689). In it, the theme of Gog and Magog can be found under the name “The place of return: Signs of the Hour and the Story of Gog and Magog”.

With regard to the text analyzed here, the common view is that there is hardly any difference between the Sunni and Shi’ite traditions, although many scholars have shown that serious differences can appear across the chain of transmission of such information. The most important fact that needs to be considered in this case is this: over the centuries, only minor variations have

44 See Sackur 1898, 72–74; Lolos 1976, 82–83; McGinn 1979b, 73; Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 174.

45 See Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, chapters 4–6; see also Anderson 1932, 11–17; Doufekar-Aerts 2011, 37–52; Kalinina 2011; Kalinina, Flerov, Petrukhin 2014, 23.

46 For some details, especially the description of the wall of Alexander the Great, see also Ibn Khordadbeh 1986, 129–133; and Kalinina 2010, 119–123, who also notes the uncertainty in the positioning of the peoples Yajuj and Majuj—either the east, or in the north. See here, Ill. 4.

been made in these texts, with no alterations to the data gathered from the originals that were written in the 9th–10th centuries.⁴⁷ Among the commentators of the Quran, an authoritative source on this topic is the historian al-Tabari († 923). In fact, with regard to the matter of Gog and Magog, he followed the traditions of the 9th century. This is also valid for such authors as al-Zamakhshari († 1144), and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi († 1209). Another name to be added to this list is that of al-Hauwari (the second half of the 9th century).

Among the Shi'ite commentators of the Quran, especially important is al-Qummi (10th century). Several Arab lexicographers did their best to keep the interest in this topic alive. One of them is al-Jawhari († 1006/1007). Both the Sunni and the Shi'ite writers who dealt with the subject matter of Gog and Magog and Alexander the Great (also called 'the two-horned one'), considered Sura XVIII: 82–97 and XXI: 96–97 to be the key passages of the Quran, since they were based on tradition.

All these traditions were best summarized by a later scholar, al-Qazwini († 1283), a renowned geographer and cosmographer and the author of two particularly valuable books. One of them is known as *Cosmography*, while the other is commonly named *Geography*. Both books contain passages on Gog and Magog, based on the *hadith* collections, commentaries on the Quran, as well as early geographical works, in particular Yaqt.⁴⁸ A number of common themes have been identified in the passages on Gog and Magog and those on 'the two-horned one',⁴⁹ but more important in this case are the names, habitats and identifications, as well as the eschatological role of these 'unclean peoples'. Apart from al-Tabari's account, which mentions the original Arab names of Gog and Magog, namely, Yajuj and Majuj,⁵⁰ al-Tussi, a Shi'ite scholar, also commented on these names. According to him, they were both of foreign origins.⁵¹

Where was the habitat of these two peoples? According to the Islamic geographic tradition, the world was divided into seven climes, and the space inhabited by the 'unclean peoples' was most often located between the fifth and seventh climes. In the 13th century, for example, al-Qazwini pointed to the eastern parts of the seventh clime as the abode of Gog and Magog. Al-Tabari and al-Baydawi were inclined to locate the two mountains, mentioned above,⁵² "in Armenia, in Azerbaijan or the most eastern part of the land of the Turks; but the two mountains perhaps are also to be found between Armenia and

47 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 55–56.

48 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 56–57.

49 For more details, see Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 57–79.

50 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 89.

51 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 73.

52 See also the Quran XVIII: 93/96.

Azerbaijan or in the farthest North". The traditions followed by the Shi'ite scholars 'locate' the barrier somewhere beyond the Mediterranean region, "between the two mountains found there, whose rear part is the encircling Sea/Okeanos" (the so-called *Bahr al-Muhit*), or behind Derbent and the "two Khazars", "in the direction of Armenia and Azerbaijan".⁵³ Al-Tusi believed the barrier was "behind the Bahr al-Rum, between the two mountains found there". In his words, "the rear part of these is near the Bahr al-muhit". "But others", adds al-Tusi, "say that the barrier is behind Derbent and the Caspian Sea (the so-called *Bahr al-Khazar*), towards Armenia and Azerbaijan". According to Razi, however, "the place of the two barriers is in the north, between Armenia and Azerbaijan, or they should be looked for in the degree of latitude of the Turks".⁵⁴

In the decades after the 690s, the peoples of Gog and Magog—as incarnations of *arch-evil* and following the established at that time model of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara—were called 'Ishmaelites' among the Christians. This name would gradually become a *topos* in the whole of Christian Europe over the course of the next centuries: as early as the beginning of the 8th century in the Latin parts of the continent, during the 10th century in Bulgaria and during the following two centuries in Kievan Rus'. Let me reiterate once again that, according to Gerrit Reinink, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara was written at the very end of the 7th century, most probably in 691 or 692. In this work, the Muslim Arabs are 'identified' as the biblical invaders who were supposed to fulfill God's will for punishing the Christian Byzantines for their 'lawlessness', as the medieval Christian cliché goes. According to the Syrian author, the Arab 'Ishmaelites' were the sign of God that seemed to announce the impending Second Coming of Christ.⁵⁵

2.2.4 *Notions of Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem' and of the Heavenly Jerusalem—as a Heavenly Constantinople, with Constantinople Being Perceived as the Center of the New 'Holy Land'*

These are all aspects which essentially refer to a subject matter, known in the scholarly literature as 'imperial ideology and eschatology', or also as the notion of the 'dual (doubled) Holy Land'.⁵⁶

53 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 73.

54 Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 74.

55 The literature on this issue is immense; see, for instance, Alexander 1985; Reinink 1992, 149–187.

56 For further details, see, for example, Podskalsky 1972; Patlagean 1998, 112–126; Magdalino 1993, 10.

It has long been known that after 330, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire was transferred to Constantinople by order of Emperor Constantine the Great. Long before that, however, the fall of the same empire was seen by many Christians as directly linked to Christ's Second Coming. At the same time, a large number of Roman learned men believed that the Kingdom of God had already been prophesied or, indeed, even realized in the Roman Empire.⁵⁷

According to the author of *Christian Topography*, Kosmas Indikopleustes,⁵⁸ the prophet Daniel had nothing to do with the idea of the subsequent alternation of the so-called four kingdoms which appear in his prophecy. For Kosmas, the prophet had a lot to say about these four kingdoms and the impending *End of the world*, expected to occur after the fourth of them ended, but he had instead chosen to close the topic with the Hellenistic monarchies and could not divulge anything on the Roman Empire.⁵⁹ This way, Kosmas Indikopleustes interpreted the new Christian Roman Empire not as the fourth kingdom that was destined to perish at the *End of Times*, in accordance with Daniel's prophecy, but rather as a "fifth kingdom", as an "empire without end", essentially. The latter meant that Kosmas perceived this empire in a completely different way than before, i.e. as set on the same plane as the messianic restoration of the Kingdom of Israel.⁶⁰ Thus, the mental 'patterns' of the Byzantines allowed for the emergence of the well-known special connection between the 'blessed City', the 'chosen people' of Israel, and the (Roman Christian) Empire, and also between Constantinople and Jerusalem. The demonstration of this special bond 'on a large scale' began in the times of Heraclius (610–641), especially during the 620s and 630s, when the Empire faced the Persians for the last time within a short period of time, losing in 614 not only Jerusalem, but also such an extremely important relic as the True Cross. It managed to get them back, both the city and the Cross, a few years later, around 628 (630?). The devastating attack of the Arabs that followed shortly afterwards, along with their capture of Jerusalem in the 630s, shrank the territory of the Roman Empire significantly, stripping it of the lands of ancient Israel in particular. These losses, in turn, further encouraged the Byzantines to identify themselves ever more strongly with the concept of the 'new chosen people'.

57 Magdalino 1993, 10; Magdalino 2008, 121.

58 See Kominko 2013.

59 Magdalino 1993; for details, see also Podskalsky 1972, 11–12; MacCormack 1982, 287–309.

60 The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 14.

The first idea, i.e. regarding the perception of Constantinople as a ‘second/new Jerusalem’,⁶¹ had already appeared in written form sometime around 500; later, it would become a standard *topos* in the panegyrics of the Byzantine capital. This idea, however, could be found not only in written (narrative) form, but also in architecture, more specifically, in the construction of two churches in Constantinople in the 6th century. The first one was dedicated to St. Polyeuctus and was completed in 527, and the second one is the well-known Hagia Sophia of Emperor Justinian the Great (527–565), built between 532 and 537. The Church of St. Polyeuctus, for instance, replicated some of the embellishments and proportions of the famous Temple of Solomon in ancient Israel (as described in *2 Kings* 6).⁶² Some scholars are inclined to see the architectural measurements and proportions of said church in Constantinople as an imitation of the proportions mentioned in *Book of Ezekiel* (42:2–3 and 41:4).⁶³ The discourse, however—if we were to again refer to Robert Ousterhout—was more about “the construction of divinely sanctioned kingship than about sacred topography”.⁶⁴

The church dedicated to the Divine Wisdom contains even more clearly defined examples of comparisons with the ancient Jews, ‘God’s chosen people’ of old. For instance, in a hymn written by Romanos the Melodist (c. 536), the author stresses the fact that Hagia Sophia surpassed not only the buildings erected by King Solomon in Jerusalem, but also those built there on the orders of the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great.⁶⁵ In another hymn, written a bit later, around 562, by the hand of an unknown author, the same idea and comparisons are taken even further: it is stated that the Temple of Solomon was built in the Promised Land for one nation only, the Jews, while Hagia Sophia in Constantinople was a universal temple, created for all the peoples on the face of the earth.⁶⁶

A source, known as *Narration on Hagia Sophia* (*Diegesis*, probably the 9th century), claims that Justinian the Great was inspired by God to begin the construction of “a church such as had never been built since the time of Adam”.⁶⁷ This divine inspiration was also reinforced by the structure of the

61 Magdalino 2008, 121; on the various stages of the long process of Constantinople’s identification with the ‘New Jerusalem’, see Vachkova 2004, 127–130 and esp. 129.

62 For more details, see Ousterhout 2010, 243–247 with the titles and opinions cited there.

63 See, for example, Ousterhout 2010, 243–244 and n. 77.

64 Ousterhout 2010, 245.

65 Magdalino 1993, 12.

66 *Life of Daniel the Stylite* 1923, 12; Magdalino 1993, 12 and n. 35.

67 See the text in Dagron 1984, 196–211; see also Mango 1972, 96–102; Brubaker 2011, 80; on the proportions and the metrical correlations in this cathedral, viewed by some as an imitation of the Temple in Jerusalem, see Ousterhout 2010, 242 and n. 67, 68, 69.

text, of which 20% were dedicated to angelic interference.⁶⁸ This fact leaves no place for speculation as to the specific ideological meaning incorporated in the church that was built at the very heart of the Empire during the 530s.

The so-called 'angelic passages' in the work on Hagia Sophia reveal God's assistance in the construction of the church (and the divine approval of its erection in general). The latter is especially visible in the claim that the angels—in their role as God's representatives and bearers of His will—could be found in almost all aspects of the church's design and its decoration. For example, the angels and God appear in a dream related to Jerusalem: there, they plan a building, and later it is again the angels who determine the distribution of window niches and the specifics of light dispersion within the church. Last but not least, a guardian angel vows to protect the cathedral until the *End of Times* (*sic!*).⁶⁹ In addition to this, the final verses end with events related to the dedication of the church and a statement attributed to Justinian the Great. According to it, the emperor himself had said that with this deed he had surpassed none other than Solomon himself. The latter is a clear reference to the supreme glory of this church, which surpassed the fame of the most notable temple in the Holy Land at the time, built by King Solomon in Jerusalem.⁷⁰

It is worth quoting the words of Robert Ousterhout here, according to whom the church in question, with its symbolism and metaphorical 'language', probably evoked in the minds of the Byzantines the Heavenly Jerusalem, or the Temple of Jerusalem, or the Throne of God, or maybe all three.⁷¹ Again citing Ousterhout, the emphasized allusions of the Temple to Hagia Sophia in Constantinople take on many and varying dimensions. Hagia Sophia, as the *New Temple*, built by Justinian the Great at the very heart of the capital, transformed the whole city into a *New Jerusalem*, emphasizing its sacral character, without necessarily replicating all the forms of the original Jerusalem. This church also gave additional support to Justinian's aspirations for divine patronage of his power, by giving his rule the underlying foundation of Divine Chosenness that was visible in the Old Testament. The above-mentioned themes—the religious and political metaphors provided by the Old Testament, by Solomon, and his Temple—and expressed through architectural forms, surpassed the times of Justinian the Great.⁷²

68 Brubaker 2011, 83, 86.

69 Brubaker 2011, 83.

70 Brubaker 2011, 85, 87.

71 Ousterhout 2010, 239.

72 Ousterhout 2010, 248–249; for a detailed commentary, see Ousterhout 2006, 98–116; on the church and how it looked, see also Bakalov 2006, 189, 191–193.

It is therefore not surprising when Procopius of Caesarea, distantly echoing the descriptions of the Temple of Jerusalem,⁷³ wrote in the mid-6th century that whenever someone entered to pray in this church of Divine Wisdom, he was immediately filled with the understanding that it had been completed in such a miraculous way not so much by human abilities and skills, but by the will of God. The mind of the praying one lifted up to God, floating high in the air and feeling that the Lord could not be far away, and must be especially fond of this place, which He himself had chosen.⁷⁴

From here it can be easily surmised that the cited text accentuates the relation between the emperor (and the Empire) and God, as well as between the emperor and Constantinople, both of which were visibly embodied in Hagia Sophia. The greatness of Byzantium could not be emphasized more appropriately: the state of the ‘new chosen people’, protected by God, had its own special mission—to guide the Christians onto the righteous path before the advent of Judgment Day. Thus, it becomes clear that it is not by chance that this text and similar works contained numerous signs with symbolic content—in the sense of eternal destiny—for both Hagia Sophia and the capital city of the Byzantines, the new ‘chosen people’ of God.⁷⁵

At that time, the notion already existed that the Second Coming and the Last Judgment would occur in Jerusalem. But what happens, wonders Paul Magdalino, if Jerusalem has already been surpassed by Constantinople?⁷⁶ It is therefore not surprising that, viewed from this angle, the capital city of the Byzantines began to house numerous relics early on, especially ones related to Christ’s Passion, the apostles, the Mother of God, and a number of various saints and martyrs. Moreover, Constantinople was also adorned with colossal and magnificent Christian churches, like the jewels in a ruler’s crown.

According to Paul Magdalino, the rapprochement with the model of the historical Israel became more visible in the 7th century, when the Byzantine state, just like ancient Israel, lost much of its territory mainly under the pressure of Islam, becoming a small country built for battle against the mighty infidels who threatened it with conquest and captivity.⁷⁷ This is why, claims the same author, from the 8th century onwards, it began to perceive itself as the new—and

73 Ousterhout 2010, 239.

74 Procopius, *Za postroikite* 1.1.61–62.

75 Odorico 2011, 43.

76 Magdalino 1993, 12.

77 Magdalino—a lecture at New Bulgarian University, Sofia, 14 December 2009.

true—Israel, and not only in the spiritual sense, as part of the Universal Church that replaced the earthly 'chosen people' from the Old Testament, but also in the political sense, as the historical continuation of Israel. This self-awareness became especially clear during the iconoclastic confrontation.⁷⁸ For Magdalino, the period between the 9th and the 10th centuries, and the years known in historiography as the 'Macedonian Renaissance' in particular, can be considered the pivotal point of Byzantium's *New Israel* ideology. During that period, the emperors encouraged the identification with the 'chosen people', especially when departing on campaigns in the lands of ancient Israel.⁷⁹

The notion of identifying Constantinople as a 'second Jerusalem' was well established by the 10th century.⁸⁰ References, both explicit and implicit, to Byzantium as the New Israel and to Constantinople as the New Jerusalem can often be found in the Byzantine rhetorical literature of the 11th and 12th centuries.⁸¹ The perception of Constantinople as the 'New Jerusalem' in particular was further developed in the mid-12th century, during the reign of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180).⁸² Between 1166 and 1169, the emperor ordered the stone on which the dead body of Christ had been laid to be sent from Ephesus for his own tomb.⁸³ With regard to this same stone, decorated with precious stones gifted by Manuel I Komnenos, John Phokas claimed to have seen it in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.⁸⁴ According to Evelyne Patlagean, the latter is a clear sign of "reduplication".⁸⁵

In 1153, Manuel I Komnenos bestowed the fiscal revenues from a provincial Jewish community to Hagia Sophia, (supposedly) making a point of recalling that the prototype of this Constantinople church, built on the orders of Justinian the Great, was the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, which made the church in the Byzantine capital a sign of the 'New Zion'.⁸⁶ The theme of the 'New Zion' emerged at least once more during the times of Manuel I

78 *Ibid.*

79 *Ibid.*; The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 38.

80 Patlagean 1998, 113; on the various visions and policies of the Byzantine emperors after 330, with regard to the relation between Constantinople and Jerusalem, see in detail Vachkova 2004, 117–130 and esp. 127.

81 The Old Testament in Byzantium 2010, 25 and n. 104.

82 On the Komnenos dynasty in general, see Stanković 2006; on Manuel I Komnenos in particular, see Magdalino 1993a.

83 Nicetas Choniates 1975, 222, 227 ff.; Patlagean 1998, 116.

84 John Phokas, cited from Patlagean 1998, 116.

85 Patlagean 1998, 116.

86 For the text, see Dagrón 1984, 300.

Komnenos. In a ceremonial speech, addressed to the emperor on occasion of the feast of Epiphany, the rhetorician John Diogenes drew a parallel between the 'old Zion' of the prophet Jeremiah and the 'new Zion', the 'Zion right here', i.e. Constantinople.⁸⁷

The second notion, that of the Heavenly Jerusalem perceived as a Celestial Constantinople, could be traced in a vision from the 10th century, known from Byzantine sources.⁸⁸ This notion can also be found in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, dating as early as the end of the 7th century. In this version, Jerusalem is described as the place where the *End of the world* will occur and where the Last Emperor will lay his crown on Golgotha.⁸⁹

The Heavenly Jerusalem also appears in a version of *Vita of St. Basil the Younger* (the second half of the 10th century), where the author is concerned with a number of problems and especially the place of Jews in the Christian model of the *Last Times*, and gives some criteria for the easier distinction of the 'chosen' among the 'condemned': important figures from the Old Testament are presented as being among the 'chosen' ones, while the Jews, sinners and pagans are among the 'condemned'. Some scholars, including Angelidi and Patlagean in particular, consider Constantinople to be the obvious inspiration behind such an 'image' of the 'New Jerusalem'.⁹⁰

And so, the *new* 'chosen people', the Byzantines, i.e. the 'New Israel', did not reject the Old Testament, but, being gathered together by the Church, awaited Jesus Christ, who had already come once on Earth, to come again; this time—in his full Glory, to judge men. At the same time, the 'Old Israel' still awaited the first coming of the Messiah, acknowledging the perceptible sadness that such an expectation held.⁹¹ It would be normal for those who believed in His first coming to be joyous and to express this feeling by visible signs here on Earth (royal and religious rituals, churches containing special symbolism, texts of different kinds and genres, etc.). These people were expected by presumption to surpass the achievements of the 'Old Israel' and for this purpose the most appropriate place was naturally expected to be the capital of the 'new' Empire, Constantinople.

87 *Fontes rerum byzantinarum* 1917, 305.

88 Cited from Mango 1980, 216.

89 Lolos 1978, 130–132; Alexander 1985, 151–184; Patlagean 1998, 113.

90 Angelidi 1982, 207–215; Patlagean 1998, 114.

91 Amphilochius (Radovich) 2008, 16.

2.3 Later Development of the *Topos* of the *Direction* of the *Evil Forces'* Invasions in the 10th–12th Centuries

As has already been established, the aforementioned *topos* is permanently associated with notions like the '*End of Times*', 'Holy Land', 'the Second Coming of Christ' and such, as well as those about the sacred geography and the paradigm of Alexander the Great.

2.3.1 *The Byzantine Case*

I would like to begin this paragraph with a reference to Paul Magdalino, according to whom no Byzantine apocalyptic texts from the 11th–12th centuries have survived, although their existence and spread across the lands of the Empire is beyond any doubt.⁹² This finding is in line with the overall context in the Byzantine state during these two centuries, and especially with the threats from the 'Scythian' north and from the west, i.e. from the Rus' and the Pechenegs, and also from the Normans and the Crusaders, respectively. The 'response' of the Byzantines to the above-mentioned threats should therefore be reconstructed largely on the basis of other sources, as well as through the rationalization and interpretation of some symbolic actions of the prominent figures at the time.

The First Crusade from the late 11th century became a whole new factor in the concept of the *Holy Land* as it was perceived until then in the Byzantine state. According to Evelyne Patlagean, under the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) the Promised Land "was hardly mentioned by historiography and the official rhetoric, which both insisted, rather, on the apostolic character of the emperor".⁹³ Despite the increased interest in the original Promised Land from the second half of the 11th century onwards, which was largely the result of the crusades, the Byzantines nonetheless adhered to their tradition to accentuate 'their own' *Holy Land* and the fate of its *center*, Constantinople, in particular.⁹⁴

But, as is usually the case, this approach was not without its exceptions. With regard to the Byzantine perception of Jerusalem as the center of the Promised Land, as well as the motif of the Last Emperor from the end of the 11th century (which was also 'typical' for the Bulgarians, as will be shown in Chapter 3), Paul Magdalino, referencing Joannes Zonaras, writes the following:

92 Magdalino 2005, 47–53; Magdalino 2008, 131.

93 Patlagean 1998, 118; see also Magdalino 2008, 131.

94 Magdalino 2008, 131.

after Jerusalem's capture by the knights of the First Crusade in 1099, the basileus Alexios I Komnenos, incited by some monks, considered going on a pilgrimage to the holy city to leave his crown there, precisely as it was described in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara—an allusion to the actions of the Last Emperor before the coming of Antichrist.⁹⁵

The motif of the Last Emperor, as has long been known in historical circles, is well developed in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, which work—strangely enough—does not contain any mention of Constantinople. Instead, the author talks about 'Rome' or the 'Great Rome', thus elegantly avoiding any commitment to the fact that the Byzantine capital is not present in the canonical books.⁹⁶ If we were to take a look at the visions of Pseudo-Methodius in the original Syriac text, we would have to admit to the existence of some inconsistency: the basileus generally resided in Constantinople, but it would not be the capital of the Byzantines that would play a significant role before the *End of Times*, according to the bishop of Pathara. And this role, I suppose, can be explained to some extent by the fact that the author of the text belonged to the Syrian tradition and not the Byzantine one, which only much later would attribute an apocalyptic role to the city on the Bosphorus.⁹⁷

These later interpolations include the well-known passage about Vyzas/Byzas, an obvious allusion to the old name of Constantinople, Vyzantion/Byzantion. The interpolation can be associated with one of the famous sieges of Constantinople by the Arabs, most probably the one from 717–718.⁹⁸ Of special interest is the image of the Saracens during the siege. In the edited and interpolated version of the *Apocalypse*, the 'Ishmaelites' were portrayed as having breached the fortification walls of the Byzantine capital and reached the *Forum Bovis/Forum Tauri*, which was located on the main street of Constantinople, *Mese* (here, again, lies an allusion to the 'middle', 'center', from Gr. *mesos*), where they were thrown back thanks to divine intervention. Since the Xylokerkos—the gate of Constantinople through which the Saracens allegedly invaded, and which was situated north of the famous *Golden Gate* of the Byzantine capital⁹⁹—was mentioned in the Greek edition of Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypse*, in later texts with a similar prophetic

95 Magdalino 2005, 49–51; see also Magdalino 1993, 3–34; the different versions of the prophecy about the Last Emperor laying down his crown in Jerusalem, see esp. Alexander 1985, 162–164.

96 Kraft 2012, 27.

97 On the similarities and differences between the Syriac original and its Greek translation, see Alexander 1985, 51–60.

98 Kraft 2012, 28, with cited literature.

99 For the Bulgarian associations with this gate, see Vachkova 2010, 250–265.

content it became, along with the Xerolophos Hill,¹⁰⁰ an important *topos*, associated with apocalyptic events. As both Albrecht Berger and Wolfram Brandes have pointed out,¹⁰¹ this prophecy would come to play an important role in the worldview of the locals, and for the subsequent urban planning of the capital as well. The latter can be distinctly seen at the end of the 12th century, during the reign of Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195; 1203–1204): the basileus ordered the Xylokerkos gate, which had long become notorious due to the same prophecy, to be walled off, so that it could not be breached during a possible attack by Western knights, and thus open the way to the capture of Constantinople.¹⁰²

Let us now again take a look at the threshold between the 11th and the 12th century. Evelyne Patlagean, citing Joannes Zonaras, adds some important details, namely, that at the same time, the basileus Alexios I Komnenos was seriously ill, but nevertheless, the same monks “had told him that he would not die before he had gone to Jerusalem, to worship there at the tomb of Christ and given up his crown” in this holy city.¹⁰³ Thus, Alexios I Komnenos was, in fact, “being cast” in the role of the Last Emperor, if we were to again cite Paul Magdalino.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, I would also like to mention a fact that will undoubtedly add a meaningful touch to the times of this basileus, who ruled the Empire on the threshold between the 11th and the 12th century and, more importantly, in view of our subject—in the years of the anticipated once again *End of the world*, i.e. around 1092. Hardly by accident, Alexios I Komnenos ordered his highly-skilled mosaic craftsmen to recreate in the imperial palace the scene of the ... Last Judgment!¹⁰⁵ This could very well be yet another allusion to his specific role, that of the Last Emperor. And—let me explicitly state this—this was regardless of the fact that it was neither the emperor himself, nor his subjects, but the knights of the First Crusade who became the Christians that succeeded in regaining Jerusalem from the ‘Ishmaelites’ in 1099.

Paul Magdalino points at the existence of another text, this time by John Tzetzes and dating prior to the Second Crusade (1147). According to Tzetzes, the Byzantines at that time were already plagued by the persistent worry that the West was going to attack Constantinople.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the re-emergence

100 The so-called seventh hill of the capital—for more information on it and its relation to King Solomon, see Vachkova 2010, 272–273.

101 Berger 2008, 136–137; Brandes 2008, 193–195.

102 Nicetas Choniates 1975, 404.6–7; see also Kraft 2012, 29–30.

103 Patlagean 1998, 119.

104 Magdalino 1993, 26.

105 *Ibid.*

106 Magdalino 2008, 131–132; Ioannis Tzetzae 1972, 87–88.

of an old motif can be seen in Byzantium before the mid-12th century: that of the Saracens (Ishmaelites) and their siege of Constantinople in 717–718, and especially their attacks on Byzantine Sicily in the 820s, when, according to the prophecies of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, a similar notion had begun to form.¹⁰⁷

The Third Crusade in 1189–1190 further heightened the degree of this anxious anticipation, since the leading figure in it was none other than the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Frederick I Barbarossa (who died by accident during the same crusade, drowning in a river in Asia Minor in 1190). Barbarossa considered himself to be a messianic ruler, but what worried the minds of the Byzantines even more was the fact that he led his armies towards Jerusalem through the lands of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁰⁸

A further example concerning the fate of Constantinople could be added to the above ones. Around the year 1200, the English chronicler Roger of Howden reported two interesting prophecies which he supposedly had heard from the ambassadors of the Frankish king at the court of the Byzantine basileus in the capital on the Bosphorus. In his words, “Daniel the Constantinopolitan prophet” had predicted that the Franks would recover the Promised Land from the infidels, and it would happen in the year when Easter coincided with the Feast of the Annunciation. The ambassadors had further added that “an old Greek man” had told them of a special prophecy, inscribed on the famous Golden Gate in the Empire’s capital, which had never been opened in the last 200 years. This prophecy namely stated that, “when the blond king will come from the West, I (the Gate—*Author’s note*) will open by myself”; and then the Westerners who spoke the Latin language would rule and dominate in the capital city of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁰⁹

In view of Constantinople’s further fate, does this mean that the idea of the knights from Western Europe taking on the role of the apocalyptic ‘Ishmaelites’ was widespread among the Byzantines in the 12th century? Because calling them thus, as well as labeling them as the ‘unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog’ somehow cannot be perceived as implied in this case: after all, the knights were Christians themselves, and not Muslims. Of course, after the Great Schism of 1054, the Byzantines had much more serious grounds for perceiving the representatives of Western Europe as being far worse than merely ‘unclean’. Still, one thing can be said with certainty: after the First Crusade, the Byzantines, by remodeling some important motifs and *topoi*

107 Magdalino 2005, 51.

108 *Ibid.*

109 Roger of Howden 1871, 355–356—cited from Magdalino 2005, 51.

in their apocalyptic traditions, confirmed, if not actually created, the perception that the crusades were in fact acts of pure aggression against the 'center of the world', 'the city of Constantinople, protected by God'.¹¹⁰ After the Second Crusade at the end of the 1140s in particular, Joannes Cinnamus directly accused the West of using the liberation of the Promised Land simply as a pretext to plunder and ruin the lands of the Byzantines. In his eyes, the crusaders had openly anti-Byzantine intentions.¹¹¹

But if we were to go back to an earlier period in the Byzantine perception of Gog and Magog and the invasions of the 'Scythian peoples' into the lands of the divinely chosen Byzantines and their city of Constantinople, protected by God, we would have to accept the fact that the Rus', who were also called Varangians (*Varaggioi*), were identified by the Byzantines as the 'northern barbarians' before the Apocalypse, following Ezekiel's prophetic description of the *Rosh* people.¹¹² This perception was widely held in the Byzantine capital after its unexpected siege in 860 by Rus'ian ships and, of course, during the first half of the 10th century, when the Rus' again besieged Constantinople at least twice. At the same time, it should be specified that none of the various apocalyptic scenarios contained an invasion by Gog and Magog into Constantinople, Rome or Jerusalem. Still, in the words of Magdalino, during the 10th century, and in view of the expected *End of the world* in 992, the Byzantines feared for the fate of their capital. A rumor crept among Constantinople's inhabitants—that later developed into a widespread perception—that the 'barbarian people' from the north (or from the west) would come to destroy their city. According to Magdalino, during the whole 10th century and especially during its second half, Byzantium was teeming with all kinds of eschatological prophecies.¹¹³

It is worth noting another significant fact here: the Syrian, Byzantine and Western European (Latin) versions of the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara all mention that the Last Emperor would first conquer the Arabs, i.e. 'the sons of Ishmael', and only then would an angel of God halt the invasion of 'the peoples of Gog and Magog'.¹¹⁴ At the same time, nowhere in the Holy Scripture can there be found a prophecy of the Roman emperor first defeating a hostile army and only then marching on to Jerusalem to surrender his crown.¹¹⁵

110 Magdalino 2005, 53.

111 Joannes Cinnamus 1976, 58; Dimitrov 2014, 35.

112 See Ezekiel 38:2–3, 39:1—regarding Gog and Magog and the Rosh people among them.

113 Magdalino 2005, 47; Magdalino 1993, 25; this viewpoint is also shared by Miltenova 2006, 85; on the siege of 860, see Vasiliev 1946; Kazhdan 1996, 191–192; Photios *Homilies* 1958, 82–110.

114 Alexander 1985, 163, 191–193.

115 Alexander 1985, 174.

Traditionally, after the end of the 7th century the Byzantine emperor was perceived as the Last Emperor who would fight against the 'Ishmaelites' and later, in the 9th–10th centuries, against the *Rosh* people, i.e. the historical Rus'. In what way this Byzantine worldview affected the image of the Seljuk Turks after the 11th–12th centuries, is a question that has yet to receive a definitive and universally acceptable answer.¹¹⁶ The Seljuks, being Muslims, fell both into the cliché of the 'Ishmaelites', and that of the 'unclean (Scythian) peoples' from the north, because prior to settling in the eastern and central parts of Asia Minor, they had engaged mainly in nomadic stock-breeding, i.e. they were nomads, just like most of the ancient Scythians. Furthermore, being Turkic-speakers, the Seljuks were perceived in the old genealogical tradition as the descendants of one of the grandsons of Japheth, which, on a metaphorical level, made them descendants of the North—of the same geographical direction, from which the 'unclean peoples' were expected to arrive.

Usually, the attacks of the Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor from the 11th century onwards have been viewed in historiography through the prism of near-constant warfare between Byzantium and the Turks, with two battles seen as especially 'emblematic': the one of Manzikert (1071) and the one of Myriokephalon (1176). Both of these battles, as is well known, ended in heavy defeats for the Byzantine armies, and after the first one the Seljuks even succeeded in reaching the western parts of Asia Minor, becoming a threat for Constantinople itself. Thanks to the efforts of Alexios I Komnenos and his son, John II Komnenos, the Byzantines, at times with the active help of the knights of the first two crusades, managed to drive out the Seljuk Turks into the remote eastern regions of Asia Minor. But according to Ralph-Johannes Lilie, for instance, the relations between the Byzantines and the Seljuks during the 12th century in particular could hardly be described accurately with the cliché of 'constant warfare' for supremacy. Rather, the 12th century was a time of peaceful coexistence between the two powers, which is to say that the sources of that time do not contain enough data to point to some serious military expeditions or continuous border warfare. In the view of Ralph-Johannes Lilie, both sides accepted the existence of the *Other* and such a state of affairs probably best describes the essence of the situation.¹¹⁷

In view of the above-mentioned facts, during the same period between the 11th and the 12th centuries, the Rus' used the cliché 'Ishmaelites' mainly regarding the Cumans, their fiercest adversaries at the time, although their close

116 For the Seljuk ethnogenesis from a Christian point of view in the 11th–12th centuries, see Beihammer 2009, 589–614.

117 Lilie 1991, 38.

neighbors in the east, the Volga Bulgars, as well as the more distant ones in the southeast, the Khwarazmians, were also Muslims.

Certain passages from another specific Byzantine text deserve our attention in view of the perception of apocalyptic prophecies and actions at the very end of the 10th century. The work in question is the so-called *Ta Patria* (*Constantinopoleos*), a compilation of texts that emerged in Byzantium around 995.¹¹⁸ This date quite naturally brings to mind the anticipation of the *End*, which, as has already been mentioned many times, was typical for the Byzantines with regard to the year 992. This particular work pays enormous attention to St. Constantine the Great, with the emperor, Equal to the apostles, being presented not only as the creator and initial benefactor of Constantinople, but also as the one who provided the City with several statues with apotropaic functions. Also listed are the deeds of several other emperors who inherited the throne of Constantine the Great, all of them seen through the prism of their attitude towards important markers of the urban environment of Constantinople (squares, statues, etc.). The author of this compilation was obviously strongly influenced by some motifs from the apocalyptic prophecies of the time. In this very connection, he mentions the interpretation of a group of statues at the Hippodrome,¹¹⁹ probably in accord with the notion of the future absorption of the City by the sea.¹²⁰ He interprets the sculptural scenes at the base of the equine statue in the Forum of Theodosios (the so-called Taurus) as a version of the prophecy of 'the last things', when Constantinople was expected to be plundered by a barbarian people—in this specific case, the Rus'.¹²¹ The author of *Ta Patria* also explains the toponym *Bryas*, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, stating that it would be there that the Last Emperor would hear wailing and gnashing of teeth from the doomed city, at the start of his journey to Jerusalem,¹²² just as prophesied in the apocalyptic texts that stemmed from the tradition of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara.¹²³ Thus, at least in this text, Constantinople is directly linked to the eschatological 'last things', coded in some of its monuments, inscriptions and its urban topography as a whole, as visual equivalents of the things known from the apocalyptic texts.¹²⁴

118 For a general overview, see Dagron 1984; Berger 1988; Magdalino 2013, 207–219.

119 *Ta Patria II*, ch. 77.

120 Magdalino 2013, 207.

121 *Ta Patria II*, ch. 47.

122 *Ta Patria II*, ch. 170.

123 Magdalino 2013, 217.

124 *Ibid.*

According to the same apocalyptic tradition, however, Constantinople would not have an enviable fate, because it would be abandoned by the Last Emperor who would journey to the Promised Land and Jerusalem, to lay down his crown at Golgotha, before leaving this world. In other words, the text points to Jerusalem (and not the Byzantine capital) as the eschatological *center* where the ‘last things’ were supposed to occur. In this way, Constantinople’s role in the *End of Times* is minimized—especially compared to Jerusalem—despite the substantial number of churches and relics in the capital city of Byzantium. By predicting that the City would be swallowed by water, and calling it *Heptalophos*,¹²⁵ a name used for Rome in the Sibylline prophecies, some texts from the apocalyptic tradition cast the ‘New Rome’ in the mould of the notorious Babylon, commonly called a ‘harlot’ in this same literature.¹²⁶ And as is well known, Babylon had been a grand imperial city, but also a ‘spoiled’ one, traditionally linked to the exodus of the ‘chosen people’ after 586 BC. Placing the ‘New Rome’ on the same plane as Babylon suggested that the former would suffer before the *End of Times*, just as Babylon had suffered for oppressing the Jews, the initial ‘chosen people’.¹²⁷

At the same time, something else to consider is a specific exception in Byzantine history, concerning the perception of the ‘dual’ Holy Land and the entry of the Byzantines into Jerusalem, in particular. It is known that the period which began in the second half of the 10th century and ended, roughly, with the death of Emperor Basil II in 1025, is called the “Byzantine Reconquista” in historiography. During these years, viewed in an eastward direction, the Byzantines successfully reached as far as the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, i.e. almost to the initial Promised Land itself, expanding the lands of the Empire—for the last time in its history—with vast parts of the Near East. Yet the Byzantines themselves did not believe that they would ever enter the city of Jerusalem.¹²⁸

The idea of a Christian Roman Emperor who, together with the people he gathered, would witness the promised time of abundance and prosperity shortly before the coming of Antichrist was widespread also during the reign of Basil II.¹²⁹ It was namely in those years that the Christian world witnessed something hitherto unheard of. It occurred shortly after the year 1000 and before 1033, and for this reason could not easily be missed by the apocalypticists

125 Brandes 2003, 58–71; the phrase “seven-hill Babylon” appears often also in the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic literature, see Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996.

126 Magdalino 2013, 218.

127 *Ibid.*

128 For the possible reasons behind this belief, see Magdalino 2003, 265–266.

129 Shivarov 2013, 128.

who tended to see divine signs of the impending *End* in almost anything. In 1009, Caliph al-Hakim ordered for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to be destroyed.¹³⁰ What the Byzantine basilei managed to achieve in the years following this truly shocking event for the Christian minds,¹³¹ was to obtain the permission of the 'Saracens' (actually from the Cairo-based Fatimids) to undertake the reconstruction of the famous church; it was completed only in 1048, during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055).¹³²

As could be expected in such a situation, the Byzantines took into account the realities of the times (the still unconcluded struggle with the Bulgarians for supremacy over the western part of the Balkan Peninsula, as well as the Byzantine commercial interests regarding the Arab world in the Levant), and did not immediately mount a revenge against the "infidel Saracens" and Caliph al-Hakim in particular. In the following three–four decades, however, the Byzantine basilei made every effort to make the most of the situation that had occurred after 1009, and to become patrons of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher with the consent of the caliphs. All of these Byzantine actions, especially after the 1020s, developed in parallel with the increased interest of various (especially western) pilgrims in the city of Jerusalem (*cf.* its peak namely around the year 1000 and before 1033). Some of them were even received personally by the basilei in Constantinople and brought back with them various gifts that were significant for the soul's salvation, such as particles of the True Cross or other relics.¹³³ The Byzantine emperor Romanos III Argyrus (1028–1034), for example, considered it far more important to recapture Aleppo in 1030 than to concern himself with Jerusalem and the Promised Land. Meanwhile, Romanos III and his successor, Michael IV (1034–1041), made every effort to achieve an armistice with the Arabs (in 1036, a 10-year truce was signed between the Byzantines and the Fatimids). And as all these difficult negotiations stretched out in time, the same thing happened with the idea to reconstruct the Church of the Holy Sepulcher: it got prolonged for years, before being completed in the mid-11th century, as mentioned above. For John Skylitzes, it was the successor of Roman III, Michael IV, who "completed the deed",¹³⁴

130 See further details in Beihammer 2011, 173–193; Krönung 2011, 139–158; Shepard 2012b, 505–545.

131 In Western Europe, the apocalyptic reaction to this event took the form of horrifying anti-Jewish pogroms—see Landes 1996, 79–112.

132 See Ousterhout 1989, 66–78.

133 For more details, see Shepard 2012b, 516, 519–526, 528–529; on the continued contacts between the Fatimids in Cairo and the Byzantines after 1009, see Beihammer 2011, 191–192.

134 Skyl. 1973, 111.

although Wilhelm/William of Tyre claimed that this happened later, during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos, and was realized thanks to the “imperial treasury”.¹³⁵ It would be logical to assume, then, that the reconstruction work most likely began in the times of the predecessors of Constantine IX Monomachos and continued during his rule.¹³⁶

In view of the topic at hand, we should probably not overlook at least some of the details of the decorative program in the restored church. In the words of the witness Naser-e Khosraw, by 1047 the mosaics there gleamed with gold, with the ones depicting various prophets being the most fascinating.¹³⁷ It is known that the mosaics in Nea Moni on the island of Chios were commissioned namely by Constantine IX Monomachos and that they contain a number of depictions of Old Testament prophets. The one of the bearded Solomon in particular has been given similar features as those of the basileus who bore the name of his famous predecessor, Constantine the Great.¹³⁸ Again in Nea Moni, one more parallel can be found with the new mosaics from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher: both places contain a depiction of Christ’s Ascension, with the one in the Rotunda in Jerusalem located in the apse.¹³⁹ Undoubtedly, the themes in these mosaics were carefully chosen and can be dated without difficulty to the middle years of Constantine IX Monomachos’ rule, regardless of whether the basileus had actually asked to be depicted as the Old Testament Solomon in one of them, or not.

Moreover, a novel practice was introduced in Byzantium in the mid-11th century, one that could easily be associated with the consequences of what had happened in Jerusalem in 1009: during special liturgical readings (*enkainia*), specific references to the reconstruction of the Rotunda began to appear, and this deviation in the focus of the manuscripts from the mid-11th century onwards gave a much greater publicity to this extraordinary act of the basilei, who had already begun to present themselves in their role of ‘new Solomons’. Such manuscripts became much more common compared to the previous ones which referred to Hagia Sophia.¹⁴⁰

The aforementioned exception, to which I am returning again, is dated to the first half of the 12th century and comes to confirm the theory that after the death of Basil II in 1025, the Byzantines ceased to consider an actual capture

135 William of Tyre 1986/1, 1.6., p. 113.

136 Ousterhout 2010, 250 and n. 107; this opinion is also shared by Shepard 2012b, 532–533.

137 Naser-e Khosraw 1986, 38—cited from Shepard 2012b, 533 and n. 116.

138 Ousterhout 2010, 249–250, fig. 8.

139 Ousterhout 1989, 70–71, 78; Shepard 2012b, 533–535.

140 Ousterhout 2010, 250–251; Shepard 2012b, 534.

of the Promised Land and its center, Jerusalem.¹⁴¹ Instead, and even after the reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in the mid-11th century, they chose to focus more on popularizing the ideas-and-signs of the perception of Constantinople as a 'new Jerusalem'. What I am referring to here is an account by the Byzantine author Nicetas Choniates, according to whom the basileus John II Komnenos († 1143 r.) succeeded in recapturing the city of Antioch in 1137 and had—as Choniates put it—the great desire to then rejoin this great ancient city to his capital, before continuing on to Jerusalem, to offer up gifts in the form of many and varied magnificent items in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Furthermore, continues Nicetas Choniates, the emperor even thought about taking up the task of driving all the 'barbarians' out of the Promised Land and Jerusalem in particular. In 1142, John II Komnenos launched a second Syrian campaign and when, in 1143, he was on his deathbed, he revealed to those near him that the true purpose of his campaign had been to reach Palestine, climb the mountain and stand in the place where Jesus had once stood and thus to retrieve those lands from the 'barbarians', who had so often taken them away from the Christians.¹⁴² Whether that had been the actual goal of the basileus, or whether those words had been speculatively placed in his mouth by Nicetas Choniates, is a question best left unanswered for the moment.

2.3.2 *Western European Cases*

Before beginning our analysis of specific texts from the time period in question, let us first take a look at the notions about the 'own' *Promised Land* in Western Europe before the mid-10th century.¹⁴³ The first 'imperial', or 'chosen people' by presumption, there were the Franks. As to the latter, creators of and heirs to Charlemagne's monarchy, the Frankish annals and other local sources after the mid-8th century do not contain direct references to some special covenant made between the Franks and God, in imitation of the Jewish *case* from the Old Testament era. Even the words *novus Israel* are never used directly to designate the Franks, in order to present them as the 'new chosen people'.¹⁴⁴ Of course, it is also important to note that another phrase, *populus Dei*, was often used in Western Europe with regard to *chosenness*. According to Mary Garrison, the perception of the Franks as 'chosen' and having a specific mission before Judgment Day does not indicate any linear or coherent evolution

141 See Shepard 2012b, 529.

142 Nicetas Choniates 1975, 42; Patlagean 1998, 119–120.

143 For examples from various early medieval kingdoms in Europe, see Biliarsky 2011, 66–68.

144 Garrison 2000, 117.

from its earliest emergence after the 8th century. On the contrary: this perception was used with a lot of uncertainty and disruptions, not to mention a rather peculiar fact—its articulation was most persistently asserted and realized not by the ethnic Franks themselves, but by some of the well-known foreigners from the intellectual circle at the court of Charlemagne († 814). This use can be seen in direct relation to the Frankish need for self-definition and the assertion of their ‘identity’ against the background of their struggle to differentiate themselves from the Bavarians, Lombards and Byzantines.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, the identifications through the Old Testament and the perception of the Franks as the ‘new chosen people’ were first initiated by the papacy (in the 750s) and, subsequently, by the above-mentioned foreigners at the court of Charlemagne (at the end of the same century), but they had already gained prominence and detailedness, appearing in rituals, in liturgy, in art, and also in poetry, annal-writing and legislation.¹⁴⁶ The Carolingians, however, were first and foremost “the special people of the pope, and through him, of St. Peter, and only through them, the special people of Yahweh”;¹⁴⁷ this was clearly visible in the letters of the Roman Pontiff to the Frankish kings. This Old Testament rhetoric of papal Rome from the mid-8th century also had its own easily distinguished ‘black-and-white’ scheme: the popes presented the Franks in opposition to the Lombards through Old Testament clichés. And in this opposition, the positive ‘white’ side was naturally reserved for the Franks, as the papal protectors.¹⁴⁸

By the beginning of the 9th century, however, Charlemagne had already acquired a role that was new to the Franks: that of the patron of the Holy Land! Of course, he was wise enough not to anger the basilei in Constantinople, who traditionally perceived themselves as protectors of the Promised Land. At the same time, we need to consider another important change, this time in view of the Frankish emperor’s new position after 800, by asking how he and his learned men had combined—on a *sacredness* level—the new centers of papal Rome patronized by the Franks outside of Aachen and Hildesheim, with the lands of ancient Israel. Was their vision enough, together with stereotype phrases in the texts which most often presented them as Old Testament kings (as the ‘new Moses’, ‘new David’, or ‘new Solomon’)? Were their old Gallo-Frankish lands perceived as the ‘new’ Promised Land, given that the ‘old’, ‘initial one’ was also under their protection from the early 9th century? Or rather, was

145 Garrison 2000, 119–120.

146 Nelson 1988, 215; Garrison 2000, 123–125.

147 Garrison 2000, 124–125.

148 Garrison 2000, 125.

Charlemagne glorified, notionally and *post mortem* (mostly from the 10th century onwards)—and not without connection to some expectations in the West regarding the *End of the world* around the year 1000—as an actual pilgrim in the holy sites of ancient Israel, who had even personally visited the ‘center’ (i.e. the mystical *core* of the Christian civilization), which Constantinople itself claimed to be during this same century.¹⁴⁹ In this regard, not without its logic is the assumption of Veselina Vachkova that the emperor of the West “began to be expected to be mainly the pious pilgrim-ruler, liberator-ruler and the like in the same spirit, i.e. ... a monarch with a personal mission, whose Empire had no boundaries by definition”.¹⁵⁰ This became an actual phenomenon in the West mostly after the 10th century and especially in the times of the First Crusade.

In the period from the mid-10th century onwards, amid the visible growth of expectations regarding the onset of the *End of the world* in 1000, Western Europe saw the emergence of a number of interesting texts dealing with various apocalyptic and eschatological issues (the invaders in the Christian ‘kingdom’, the astronomical signs, etc.). As was seen above (see Chapter 1), perhaps the most notable among these texts concerning the ‘barbarian’ attacks on Western Europe, was the work of Adso of Montier-en-Der (also known as Adso Dervensis) from the northeastern part of the western Frankish Kingdom.

Adso’s message, as has already been discussed, was actually a response to a letter from Queen Gerberga, wife of Louis IV, the king of the western Franks at the time. The tractate was titled *De ortu et tempore Antichristi*. In our case, the most important thing is to emphasize once more that this text appeared in a time when the lands of West Francia (and the West in general) were subjected to terrifying and devastating attacks from the Magyars and the Normans (mostly Danes and Norwegians). The Danes in particular succeeded in creating a vast kingdom during the 10th century, which included Norway and dominated the North Sea all the way up to Iceland. There, the Danish settlers gradually created a specific kind of society, defined by Jacques Le Goff as a “plutocratic oligarchy”, which enabled the Icelanders’ conversion to Christianity at the end of the 10th century.¹⁵¹ Thus, it is quite possible that in the face of the Magyar invasions from the East, and the Norman ones from the North/Northeast, Queen Gerberga saw in these trying times signs of the advancing ‘unclean peoples’ of Gog and Magog before the *End of Times*.

149 For further details, see Latowsky 2008, 153–167; Gabriele 2011.

150 Vachkova S.a., 248.

151 Le Goff 2005, 43.

With the inevitable risk of repeating issues, passages, and cases that have already been mentioned or interpreted, let me nevertheless note that what Adso actually achieved with his letter to Queen Gerberga was to reduce to a minimum the queen's fears of the invasions, by offering her a sophisticated and 'scientifically' grounded scheme instead. It is true, said Adso, that the old Roman Empire is no more. But after Charlemagne's coronation, which was conducted by the pope himself on 25 December 800 in Rome, the Franks became, both *de facto* and *de jure*, the legitimate successors of the Roman Empire. After briefly presenting the model of the interchanging 'world kingdoms', well known in the Christian world, Adso notes as indisputable the fact that in the succession of the four empires the Roman Empire appeared last, as the most powerful among them, before which "all peoples bowed their heads" and paid tribute. Further on in the text Adso continues thusly:

This is why the Apostle Paul says that the Antichrist will not come into the world "unless the defection shall have come first", that is, unless first all the kingdoms, That were formerly subject [of the Empire of the Romans—*my note, Ts. S.*], shall have defected from the Roman Empire. This time has not yet come, because even though we may see the Roman Empire for the most part in ruins, nonetheless, as long as the Kings of the Franks who now possess the Roman Empire by right shall last, the dignity of the Roman Empire will not completely perish because it will endure in its kings. Some of our learned men say that one of the Kings of the Franks will possess anew the Roman Empire. He will be in the last time and will be the greatest and the last of all kings. After he has successfully governed his empire, he will finally come to Jerusalem and will lay aside his scepter and crown on the Mount of Olives. This will be the end and the consummation of the Roman and Christian empire.¹⁵²

This long passage from the work of Adso of Montier-en-Der clearly outlines the final conclusion of its author: the empire of "the Romans and Christians" would undoubtedly survive until the time of the last Frankish ruler. Therefore, Gerberga should not have to fear the invasions of the 'barbarians' from the East and the North, since the power and the Empire were still in the hands of her husband, the king of Francia, Louis IV.

152 See Adso of Montier-en-Der in McGinn 1979, 89–96, at 93; for the Latin version, see *Adso Dervensis*, ed. D. Verhelst, 1976.

Adso did not concern himself with formulating a deliberate concept regarding the origins of the invaders in the holy lands of the Frankish Empire, ruled in a Roman-and-Christian spirit. It is necessary to point out here that Adso's letter contains a very important motif, which has already been mentioned: that of the Last Roman Emperor. It gained popularity among the learned circles of the West from the beginning of the 8th century, but was actually 'invented' at the end of the 7th century by Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, who used it in reference to the Byzantine basileus as the savior from the Islamic invasion.¹⁵³ The same motif can also be found in the writings of the bishop of Lyon Agobard († 840), aimed against the Jews. Writing a century before Adso, Agobard also deliberately added a new element: the aforementioned concept of the Last Emperor of the Romans, whose reign would precede the coming of Antichrist.¹⁵⁴

But Queen Gerberga was not the only one afraid of the 'signs' heralding the *End of Times*. For some commoners in the West, and especially the learned men there, the Normans and Magyars were indeed the 'legendary apocalyptic destroyers' of civilization and their kingdoms, the well-known Gog and Magog.¹⁵⁵ Following, as further proof, is a passage from the so-called *Letter on the Hungarians* (the mid-10th century), which was most probably sent to the bishop of Verdun:

First it must be said that the opinion which has spread among many people both in your region and in ours, is frivolous and of no worth: that the Hungarian people, hateful to God, are [the tribes of] Gog and Magog and the other races described together with them ['gens Hungrorum esse Gog et Magog ceteraque gentes quae cum eis describuntur'], of which it is especially said that "You [Gog] will come out of your place out of the uttermost parts of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army. You will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days I will bring you against my land, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes."

Ez. 38:15–16

153 For further details regarding the Last Emperor, see Alexander 1985, 151–184.

154 Bredero 1994, 98.

155 See the Foreword of "The Apocalyptic Year 1000", 2003, viii.

Since they say, *writes the anonymous author of the Letter*, that these are the Last Times and that the end of the world is near, and that therefore Gog and Magog are the Hungarians, who have never before been heard of, but who appeared now, at the end of time [*dicunt enim nunc esse nouissimum saeculi tempus finemque imminere mundi, et idcirco Gog et Magog esse Hungros, qui nunquam antea auditi sint, sed mod, in nouissimo temporum, apparuerint*].¹⁵⁶

In one of his articles Johannes Fried postulates that the Magyars were viewed by some people in Western Europe as a “perfectly ordinary people from the east or north”, who had emerged from the Maeotian swamps, i.e. the Sea of Azov region. Their emergence was easily explained through the etymologies that were so loved in the Middle Ages: they were in fact forced to come out “because of hunger” (*cf.* Lat. *hungri*); which is why they became known as *Hungri* [*illi ergo a suis tam crudeliter relictis diuper uastas solitudines uagantes tandem intrauerunt Meotidas paludes ubique majore illius multitudinis parte fame consumpta, pauci qui robustiores errant ..., quoniam region illa feris, aui-bus et piscibus fertilissima est, et captarum ferarum carnibus alebantur, pellibus tegebantur. Tali modo innumerabilis eorum creuit exercitus et a fame quam susinuerant Hungri uocate sunt*].¹⁵⁷ Fried finds this argument “false”, though not entirely lacking sense.¹⁵⁸

According to Robert B. Huygens, the German Regino of Prum was the first to describe the Hungarians in a similar way, in the entry for the year 889 of his *Chronicon*: *‘Gens Hungariorum ferocissima ... crudeliter, retro ante seculis ideo inaudita, quia nec nominata, a Scythicis regnis et a paludibus, quas Thanais sua refusione ..., egressa est’*.¹⁵⁹ Although the Magyars are not presented directly with the ‘Gog and Magog’ cliché in this passage, their habitat—by the River Don (the ancient Tanaïs)—indirectly points to the northern ‘barbarians’ near the Caucasus and the Black Sea, who were known as the aforementioned biblical ‘unclean peoples of Gog and Magog’.

It is also interesting to see how the attacks of the ‘unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog’ have been interpreted by the aforementioned Thietland, for instance, seeing as they were initially associated, following the biblical tradition, with the *End* of this world and the trials that awaited humanity before

156 See this passage in its entirety in Huygens 1957, 232; see also *The Apocalyptic Year 2003*, 337–338.

157 Huygens 1957, 234.

158 Fried 2003, 19.

159 Huygens 1957, 236.

Judgment Day. Which one of the two main visions did the abbot of Einsiedeln follow: that of the Sibylline prophecies, or the patristic one? It is obvious that in this case Thietland chose to follow the latter and not the Sibylline tradition. In the latter, Gog and Magog were identified with specific barbarian peoples, who would appear long before Antichrist and would rule before the coming of the Last Christian Emperor. He would put an end to their domination and would bring peace to Earth, before abandoning the throne himself and thus give rise to the time and dominion of Antichrist. The patristic tradition, on the other hand, viewed Gog and Magog as symbols of the 'wicked' peoples all over the world who would appear together with Antichrist.¹⁶⁰

With some small exceptions, Thietland followed St. Augustine in his translation of the names 'Gog' and 'Magog'.¹⁶¹ The St. Augustine tradition assumed that while the first name meant *tectum*, i.e. "roof" or "covered" and hence—"hidden", "secret", the second one, 'Magog', could be deciphered as *de tecto*, "from the roof". Thietland, however, preferred the version *detectum*, "open".¹⁶² Nevertheless, these insignificant variations do not disrupt the main direction of the interpretation, initiated by St. Augustine himself. Which meant that the abbot did not share the Sibylline vision of Gog and Magog as peoples coming from 'outside'. For Thietland, Gog and Magog were essentially signs that predicted the coming of Antichrist before the Last Judgment, even though he was aware that at the end, Christ would claim the final victory. At the same time, he does not question the invasions and the destruction that the 'unclean peoples' were meant to bring, but rather mentions them solely in view of a fuller presentation of Antichrist and, in particular, the Church he was after, as well as his contemporaries in the society of Swabia that had "descended into sin". Thus, Thietland joins the ranks of other mid-10th century authors who depicted a rather pessimistic picture of their own period of history, linking it—directly or indirectly—with the signs of the coming Antichrist.¹⁶³

In view of the abovesaid, however, it is necessary to underline something that has even greater value for the question at hand: for a lot of learned men in Western Europe during the 10th century, St. John's *Revelation*, where the names of Gog and Magog were directly mentioned, was to be read and perceived only in a 'mystical' way and not in a literal, i.e. historical manner. Thus, Gog and

160 For details, see Emmerson 1981, 84–88, as well as Cartwright 2003, 100, 102.

161 See Augustine, 'De civitate Dei', 20.11.

162 The text can be found in Thietland, Einsiedeln MS 38, fol. 185 r: '... Gog namque interpretatur tectum, Magog detectum'—cited from Cartwright 2003, 100 and n. 46.

163 Cartwright 2003, 100–102.

Magog were not to be identified with real peoples, such as the Magyars and/or the Normans, says Fried.¹⁶⁴

What was the situation with the Anglo-Saxons and what were their expectations with regard to the imminent year 1000? Although not a part of the restored Roman Empire of the West, the lands of early medieval England were nevertheless also subjected to the terrible attacks of the Vikings, mainly those from Denmark, but also Norwegian ones.¹⁶⁵ Thus, it would be only logical to wonder whether the Angles and Saxons shared the same expectations about the *End of Times*, and even go as far as to suspect that they could have perceived the Vikings, these “North-men” (not coincidentally known as *Normani*), as the Gog and Magog peoples. It seems that the words of Malcolm Godden are especially appropriate with regard to this issue: “The imminence of the end of the world is one of the most important themes, a framing concept indeed, for Anglo-Saxon writers in the decades surrounding the year 1000”.¹⁶⁶ In a recently published article, Catherine Cubitt also claims that in England, “apocalyptic anxieties did intensify around the year 1000 and were significant factor in courtly debate and in royal piety and policy”.¹⁶⁷

Among the sources from this period, which mainly deal with the attacks of the ‘Northerners’ on England, I have chosen two well-known authors: Ælfric, born c. 950 and died c. 1010, and Wulfstan, who wrote a series of homilies on the end of the world in the decades around (or shortly after) the year 1000.¹⁶⁸ Both witnessed the Viking invasions on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century.¹⁶⁹

Ælfric, a highly influential figure in the spiritual life of England between the late 10th and the 11th century, became abbot of Eynsham, Oxfordshire, in 1005, and during the following years he dedicated a significant part of his writings to the terrifying and wild Normans that came from the sea. It should be noted, however, that he had written a lot about the Vikings even earlier, during the last decade of the 10th century. In his earlier works, Ælfric made use of the apocalyptic expectations, but at the same time did not mention the Norman threat. In the preface to his series of so-called *Catholic Homilies* (dated to c. 990) he says that the impending *End* of this world and the coming of Antichrist are,

164 Fried 2003, 20.

165 For a detailed account of these invasions in England and the image of the Vikings there, see Simeonova 2008, 44–75, 193–210, with the literature cited there.

166 Godden 2003, 155.

167 Cubitt 2015, 30.

168 For further details, see Godden 1994, 130–162; Godden 2003, 155–180; Cubitt 2015, 27–52, with the literature cited there.

169 For more details on them, see Simeonova 2008, 65–73.

in fact, the context of his writings.¹⁷⁰ Ælfric cites the well-known biblical saying that during the *Last Times*, nation shall rise against nation and kingdom shall rise against kingdom, pointing also to different 'signs' of this *End*: great earthquakes everywhere, pestilence, famine, etc. He does not, however, connect them with the evangelical signs of the *End of the world*, which speak of the Last Days. Clearly, in this aspect, Ælfric follows the tradition of St. Augustine, who believed that it was only God who knew then the Last Days would come.¹⁷¹ At the same time, he does not mention the Vikings as the peoples of Gog and Magog, who—according to the cliché—will come to punish the sinful (e.g. English) Christians.

At the same time in another work, a compilation of *Lives of Saints* (written around 1000), Ælfric uses the *Book of Maccabees* from the Old Testament as a paradigmatic narrative. There, the longest single item is that about the just war of the Maccabees against the heathen invaders attacking Israel.¹⁷² This story provides a good model for fusing the 'national', i.e. the Anglo-Saxon, with the 'religious', i.e. Christian, in order to rouse an adequate military defense among the Anglo-Saxons against the Danes that were attacking at the time.¹⁷³ Being pagans, the latter were apparently perceived as God's means to punish the sinners of this world before the Second Coming. In England, the Vikings were called "men (that came in boats) from the sea", which suggests two possible geographical directions for the Norman invasions: from the north, i.e. present-day Norway, or from the east/northeast, i.e. present-day Denmark.

Wulfstan (archbishop of York 1002–1023) was a significant public and political figure in the last decade of the 10th century, as well as during the first two decades of the following 11th century. To date, nearly 50 of his sermons have been preserved, as well as lawcodes written by him for the English king Æthelred the Unready, and later also for the Danish ruler Cnut, who claimed the throne of England.¹⁷⁴ Wulfstan survived Ælfric and, though strongly influenced by the latter, he had to develop new perspectives in view of the notions about the Apocalypse and the Old Testament models that were suitable for England. Although Wulfstan witnessed an even greater crisis in the Anglo-Saxon lands than the one seen by Ælfric, nevertheless the main question for him at the beginning of his career remained the Apocalypse and not the Normans.¹⁷⁵

170 The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church 1844, 2–6, cited from Godden 1994, 132.

171 Cubitt 2015, 44–46.

172 Godden 1994, 141.

173 Godden 1994, 142.

174 Cubitt 2015, 35; esp. for the codes of Æthelred the Unready and his attitudes towards Judgment Day, see Cubitt 2015, 38–43.

175 See Godden 2003, 168–172.

Just as his renowned predecessor, Wulfstan dedicated his earliest works (five in total; according to some scholars, they were most probably written sometime around the year 1000, while others are inclined to date them to the years between 1005 and 1012¹⁷⁶) to the evangelical passages on the *End of the world* and the impending kingdom of Antichrist, which he saw as something inevitable and forthcoming.¹⁷⁷ In his third homily, Wulfstan states that some of the shattering events which would indicate the coming of the *End* are already visible in England and are in fact the result of the many sins that the local people have committed; he admonishes his fellow countrymen for ceasing to be faithful to God and to each other.¹⁷⁸ The passage reads as follows: “Therefore many misfortunes harm and greatly afflict us, and *foreigners* and *people from overseas* (Italics mine—*Author’s note*) greatly harass us, just as Christ in His Gospel clearly said it should happen; He said, ‘Nation shall rise up against nation’”.¹⁷⁹

The main work of Wulfstan dealing with the Vikings is called ‘*Sermo ad Anglos quando Dani maxime persecuti sunt*’ (also known as ‘*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*’); it was written not before 1014. Especially noteworthy is the fact that it was edited several times by the author, and heavily so. The sermon exists in five manuscripts, containing three different versions of the text: a short version of about 130 lines; a longer one running to 178 lines; and a longer one still, of about 202 lines.¹⁸⁰ The second version of ‘*Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*’ (MS 201, from the Corpus Christi College in Cambridge) is dated to the mid-11th century and is interesting mainly because it contains a 30-line passage dedicated to the Vikings.¹⁸¹ It directly speaks of “Vikings” or “men from the sea”/“seamen”, who humiliated the Anglo-Saxons almost daily, to the “shame” of the latter and due to “the wrath of God”; in fact, within those 31 lines the phrase “the wrath of God” can be found six times!¹⁸²

When writing this short work in 1014, Wulfstan essentially did so in the form of a sparsely worded apocalyptic sermon. During the next two years, however, he expanded the text, twice, in order to better reflect the Viking raids. According to Malcolm Godden, this allowed him to find “the framework” for the Norman invasions, while “the emphasis [of the text] gradually shifted from the apocalyptic crisis to the national one”.¹⁸³

176 For these discrepancies in the dating, see Cubitt 2015, 46–47.

177 Godden 1994, 142–143; see the text in *The Homilies of Wulfstan* 1957, sermons i–v.

178 Godden 1994, 143; Cubitt 2015, 34, 46, 47.

179 *The Homilies of Wulfstan* 1957, iii, 20–6; Godden 1994, 143.

180 Godden 1994, 143.

181 The whole passage can be found in *The Homilies of Wulfstan* 1957, xx (C) 97–126.

182 Godden 1994, 148–149.

183 Godden 1994, 152.

As in his earlier works, Wulfstan presented the attacks of the Danes in *Sermo ad Anglos* as preceding the coming of Antichrist. For the author, the problems with the Normans were in the past and in the present, while the coming of Antichrist was a matter of the future. Thus, Wulfstan followed the well-known tradition from the Middle Ages, based on *Revelation 17*, which predicted a final battle between the forces of good and evil, with the latter also including the peoples of Gog and Magog.¹⁸⁴

According to the generally accepted opinion, Wulfstan's work was based on the text of Adso of Montier-en-Der, especially regarding the notions signaling the coming of Antichrist.¹⁸⁵ However, special attention should be paid to the fact that the traditional motif of Gog and Magog in Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo* is not associated by the author with specific invaders from the north in the mid-10th century! This would mean that "neither Gog and Magog nor the four beasts [from the *Apocalypse*] seem to be what Wulfstan is invoking here",¹⁸⁶ since in his eyes, Antichrist would seduce the Anglo-Saxons who were Christians, in contrast to the Danes/Vikings who did not believe in Christ and therefore could not have taken on the role of seducers. Hence, in Godden's opinion the Normans could not have been perceived as the forces of Antichrist.¹⁸⁷ Thus, Wulfstan included the Vikings within the apocalyptic 'picture', but not as agents of Antichrist, for it was far more important for him to link the Danes to the disorder that was expected to emerge as a premonition of Antichrist's time, and in addition to present the Normans as God's punishment for the sins and evils that St. Paul saw as preceding the *End of the world*.

If we were to focus on the *topos* of God's punishment, as seen through the eyes of Ælfric and Wulfstan, we would have to note that the emphasis here falls on the tribal/national, that is on the regional, whereas the expected Apocalypse was always and by presumption thought to be universal. The latter means that God's wrath would be directed towards a particular nation due to particular sins, while the apocalyptic punishment would affect all of humanity and particularly the Christians.¹⁸⁸

If Malcolm Godden is correct in this assumption of his, then one would also have to accept that during the last decades of the Anglo-Saxon state's existence, its learned men there did not see their kingdom as the 'Holy/Promised Land' with the significance of a 'center of the (Christian) world'. Could we

184 Godden 1994, 152.

185 Emmerson 1981, 88; Cubitt 2015, 48, 50.

186 Godden 1994, 152–153.

187 Godden 1994, 153.

188 Godden 1994, 154.

then presume that neither Ælfric nor Wulfstan regarded England as synonymous with the Promised Land? Because in historical-apocalyptic literature this contamination, between the 'own' Promised Land and the original one in the Middle East, can be seen often and is seemingly implied, especially among the Byzantines and later, the Bulgarians. Among the latter, according to the scheme, the invaders, regardless of their specific names, were supposed *a priori* to attack this 'new Promised Land,' following the biblical archimodel of the peoples of Gog and Magog.

Another possible explanation could be formulated as follows: since England had never been a part either of the Carolingian Empire, or the Ottonian one in Continental Europe, it was never seen as the empire with a salvational mission regarding humanity in the *Last Times*. As is well known, the Christian emperors and their court *literati* in particular were highly intrigued with such *topoi* and concepts like the 'Holy Land', 'chosen people', the 'Last Emperor', etc., seeing themselves and their subjects from this viewpoint. At this moment, however, the questions in this regard are more numerous than their possible and, indeed, definitively sounding answers.

The English *case* is clearly not in unison with another important feature of similar periods full of chaos and a multitude of *signs* (the plague, destruction and devastation, the appearance of comets in the sky, etc.), when, as a rule, various messianic expectations and prophecies are quick to emerge. The attacks that England suffered from the invading Vikings, who were pagans and came by sea from the north and the east, could very easily be perceived in accordance with the cliché and the biblical paradigm of 'the peoples of Gog and Magog'. Therefore, it would be only logical to expect that the Vikings should trigger just such events as the aforescribed and prophesied by the biblical metatext. Could this fact be linked to the subsequent fate of Wulfstan, who became the personal adviser of the Danish king Cnut in 1018—the same year the latter became king of both Denmark and England, a title he held until 1035. According to Malcolm Godden, Wulfstan was probably trying to integrate himself into the Danish hierarchy in England, so as to keep his new position.

Attempting to answer similar questions to the above ones, and with regard to the views of Wulfstan, Godden is inclined to perceive this divine wrath not so much as a reflection of the apocalyptic traditions, but as the influence of another set of paradigms, those of the Old Testament.¹⁸⁹ According to the scholar, several of Wulfstan's works hint at an identification of events from the Old Testament with the contemporary to him 'Viking situation', like the allusions

189 Godden 1994, 154; Godden 2003, 173.

with the Babylonian captivity, for example:¹⁹⁰ a passage was dedicated to the fate of the Israelite king Zedechiah, who was taken captive and his nobility were slain by the heathen invaders, so that for the following seventy years Israel entered a state similar to enslavement; and all this because “the people became so sinful” that God let the heathens invade and capture the land of Israel.¹⁹¹ And another example: in the excerpts from the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah,¹⁹² Wulfstan chose to select God’s warning to the people of Israel.¹⁹³ Thus, by emphasizing God’s wrath at the sins of the Anglo-Saxons, Wulfstan indicated that the Viking invasions should be associated with the sinfulness of the people of England. It seems that in the second version of ‘*Sermo ad Anglos*’ Wulfstan drew heavily “on the Old Testament paradigms”.¹⁹⁴ According to Malcolm Godden, however, these Old Testament parallels suggest “the cyclic repetition of divine punishment ... rather than the once-only end of all things; they imply divine anger with the chosen people rather than the destruction of the whole world”. Wulfstan allowed for the possibility that, once settled on English land, the Vikings could, indeed, become civilized people through baptism. This is why their invasion could not be seen as the absolute *End*.¹⁹⁵ It is worth considering the fact that, according to the church fathers, the exact *End* was known only to God; and both Ælfric and Wulfstan were well aware of this same interpretation.¹⁹⁶

Although in one of his earlier homilies, he had tried to connect the Danish attacks with the biblical prophecies of the imminent *End of the world*,¹⁹⁷ Wulfstan did not make such a comparison with the Viking raids in ‘*Sermo ad Anglos*’—at least not in its revised version. Instead, he chose to place their invasions in a different context of ancient historical (paradigmatic, in fact) precedents, those of God’s wrath against the chosen people of Israel in the Old Testament, and against the Britons in English history. The second example, i.e. the story of Gildas and the fate of the Britons, conquered because of their sins by the Anglo-Saxons a few centuries earlier, was well known to the learned English society.¹⁹⁸

190 See the original text in Bethurum 1957, vi. 115–122.

191 Godden 1994, 154.

192 Bethurum 1957, xi.

193 Godden 1994, 155.

194 *Ibid.*

195 *Ibid.*

196 On the attitude towards the *End of Times* of Bede the Venerable, an author of exceptional importance for early medieval England, see Darby 2012.

197 Cf. “surget gens contra gentem”, see *Homilies*, 3. 20–26.

198 Godden 2003, 172, 175.

Thus, with the passing of the year 1000 and at least during the first few years of the first decade of the 11th century, Wulfstan had to 'overlay' the apocalyptic crisis on top of the crisis, triggered by the increased Viking invasions. This could explain why he stopped writing about the *End* of this world and instead focused on another issue, important for the time: the Danish raids and the devastation they wrought. This way, he was repeating a pattern that was already sufficiently well known from England's history: that of the Anglo-Saxon raids against the Britons, as well as the one from the biblical metatext, i.e. the Assyrian attack on Israel. In effect, this was a typical replacement of linear time with cyclical time.¹⁹⁹ One more thing should be added here: the various Old Testament models were well known to the medieval societies across the European continent and were widely used by them, especially regarding the recollection of events associated with power, ideology and the like.²⁰⁰

Even after the death of Ælfric and Wulfstan, and long after the year 1000, their descendants did not lose interest in the apocalyptic homilies. Some of their works were copied throughout the 11th century, and also into the following 12th century, thus emphasizing that historical time was perceived in two different ways: as linear on one hand, and as cyclical on the other.²⁰¹

The heritage of Cnut (1017–1035) encompassed large territories in Northern Europe: Denmark, England and Norway, which he began to rule after 1028; the Scots acknowledged themselves his vassals. Cnut died on English soil, having ordered to be buried in Winchester, the capital that he himself had chosen. The breakdown of his vast state came quickly. Already in 1042, England saw the end of its Danish dynasty, and the throne was ascended by Edward the Confessor (1042–1066), a descendant of the West Saxon royal line. He did not leave a successor and in 1066, the Scandinavian factor once more staked its interest in England: the nobility elected the half-English Harold Godwinson as king, though another Norman, the Norwegian Harald Hardrada, also had ambitions regarding the English throne. He became king of Norway in 1047, having earlier gained fame together with his Viking mercenaries for aiding the Byzantines in their battles between 1034 and 1042,²⁰² and especially for assisting in the crushing of the large-scale Bulgarian uprising led by Petur Delian in 1040/1041, as well as for his extensive travels to the far ends of Europe.²⁰³

199 Godden 2003, 176.

200 For the Bulgarian *case*, see Biliarsky 2011; Biliarsky 2013.

201 For more details regarding the transcripts, see Godden 2003, 177.

202 Sovety i rassказы Kekavmena 1972, 590–598.

203 On his ties to the Bulgarians, see Giuzelev 2012, 11–19. For a general overview of the Anglo-Saxons, Varangians and Normans in Byzantine service, see Shepard 1973, 53–92; Ciggaar 1974, 301–342; Yotov 2003; Theotokis 2012, 126–156.

In September 1066, Harald Hardrada captured York, but only a few days later he was slain in the decisive battle against the Englishmen of King Harold, at the so-called Stamford Bridge on the River Derwent. Harold's triumph, however, lasted for only a few days, because almost at the same time, the duke of Normandy, Gillaume/Wilhelm/William, reached England from the south, by crossing the English Channel. William defeated the English troops at the Battle of Hastings (1066), leaving Harold dead on the battlefield.²⁰⁴

After the victory of William the Conqueror at Hastings, the descendants of the Normans that had settled in the northern parts of the Frankish Kingdom around 180 years earlier, became masters of a considerable part of the English lands. A 'new order' was gradually established in England, drawing the kingdom away from the influence of the Scandinavians, who shifted their attention to the South, the Mediterranean region, and also to the lands in the east. The last recorded instance of an attack on England was in 1153, when Norwegians, led by their king Eystein, attacked and looted Hartlepool.²⁰⁵ So, in this turn of events, the 'northern people' quite naturally fell out of the concept of the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog' as an actual threat to the Anglo-Saxons before the *End of Times*. True, in the following two centuries, a number of local historians mentioned them in their works, and some of them (including William of Malmsbury from the 12th century, or the so-called *Encomium Emmae*, or "*Encomium for Emma*" from the mid-11th century) even softened their stance regarding the Scandinavian Vikings and the Normans from the northern reaches of present-day France. The sporadic interest towards these northern invaders, however, did not change the stereotypes in their descriptions. For the Christian authors they remained worthy of only being characterized with such clichés as "heathens", "barbarians" and "pirates".²⁰⁶

During the 11th century, the West experienced a renewed interest in apocalypticism. One particular person is especially significant for our topic and his name is Benzo of Alba.²⁰⁷ A dedicated pro-imperial writer, he used the Sibylline prophecies to make a connection between the German emperor Henry IV (1056–1106) and the well-known notion of the Last Emperor and his travels east towards Jerusalem.²⁰⁸ In his *Panegyric* (1:15), Benzo claimed that after Apulia and Calabria had been restored in their former state, Henry would wear his crown "in the land of Byzas" (*sic*), i.e. nothing short of the hinterland

204 For more details, see Simeonova 2008, 73–75.

205 Simeonova 2008, 75, 153–154, 210.

206 For further details, see Simeonova 2008, 193–210, esp. 205–210.

207 For general information on Benzo of Alba, see Schramm 1992 (repr.), 258–260.

208 McGinn 1979b, 88; Delumeau 1995, 39.

of Constantinople; after which he would continue on to Jerusalem, to free this blessed city of God, together with the Holy Sepulcher and the other holy places there. There, the emperor would be crowned once more, so as to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah, as well as some of the words in the psalms.²⁰⁹ It is worth taking notice of the double coronation of the Western/German emperor: once in the land of Byzantium, even citing Byzas (i.e. Constantinople, the ‘New Jerusalem’), just as it was predicted in the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara; and a second time in the Promised Land, i.e. in the original Jerusalem. And all this—in the yet to be conquered by the crusaders city of Jerusalem, which would be regained for the Cross only in 1099.

In truth, these ideas of Benzo of Alba could be understood more easily if they were placed within the framework of the ongoing at the time conflict between the papacy and the emperor of the West. For instance, according to Gerhoh of Reichersberg (1093–1169), Henry IV was more of an Antichrist than a true Christian emperor. This view was also shared by other writers in Western Europe in the 12th century, who wrote about the clash between this same emperor and Pope Gregory VII that erupted in 1075 for the primacy in the leadership and authority over the Western Christian societies. Their struggle lasted until 1122, before ending with the so-called Concordat of Worms, which was confirmed a year later, in 1123, by the First Lateran Council. The conflict between the imperial and the papal powers in reality challenged “the theory of history and version of the apocalyptic scenario connected with it”, since the pope’s new elevated position provoked “a serious reconsideration of traditional eschatology and apocalypticism”, i.e. of the role of the empires that replaced each other as per the Old Testament prophecies, and of the role of the Last Emperor before the *End of Times*, in particular.²¹⁰ Moreover, it also had its reflections—albeit indirectly—on the Byzantines, as was demonstrated earlier, in the works of Benzo of Alba.

Another example is even more telling. In a letter from 1074, Pope Gregory VII stated his intention to lead an expedition to pacify the Normans and then to offer his assistance to the empire of Constantinople, i.e. Byzantium, which at that time, and especially after the Battle of Manzikert (1071), was seriously ravaged by the invasions of the Seljuk Turks.²¹¹ According to Paul Magdalino, this “crusading project” of the pope “looks very much like a papal appropriation of the messianic emperor’s eschatological role”.²¹² As has already been

209 McGinn 1979b, 89; Magdalino 2005, 48.

210 McGinn 1979b, 94.

211 Cowdrey 1974, 27–40; Cowdrey 1998, 481–487; Magdalino 2005, 48 and n. 36.

212 Magdalino 2005, 48.

mentioned, the Byzantines did not fail to notice such a novelty in the west-European attitude towards the Promised Land and Constantinople in particular, although, as said, this became especially visible during the following 12th century.

Let me bring up another example in this line of thought, regarding both parts of the Christian world during the last decades of the 11th century. It directly affected the Catholic West, and also both directly and indirectly the Byzantine Orthodox East. The events in question are connected to Robert Guiscard, who invaded Byzantium in 1081 and in 1085, during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos. Thanks to the *Alexiad* (VI. 6, 1–2) of Alexios' daughter, Anne Komnene, we know that Robert Guiscard had been told by some flatterers that death would find him in Jerusalem. Guiscard took advantage of this prophecy to legitimize the invasion of his troops into Byzantium.²¹³

The same prophecy can be found not only in the Byzantine source, but also in one which had its roots in Western Europe: it was the work of Orderic Vitalis (the first half of the 12th century). Orderic wrote that Guiscard was ready to conquer Jerusalem, but that he first wanted to lay claim to Constantinople.²¹⁴ It is possible that Guiscard's intentions were fueled by the predictions of a Byzantine from South Sicily, i.e. from an apocalyptic text that was known to both Pope Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV. This source could have followed the prophecies, known from the so-called Pseudo-Daniel (which by their origins led to the Arab invasions in Sicily in the 820s), as well as those of Pseudo-Hippolytus. And since the prophecy was also mentioned by Anna Komnene, it would be logical to conclude that it was well known among the people of Constantinople.²¹⁵ This is how the West, although professing the Christian faith, began to be perceived by some Byzantines as 'red beards' (or the 'pale race'); the latter would attack the 'New Jerusalem' not from the north, but from the west.

The age of Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa witnessed the next outburst of apocalyptic sentiments in the West, and at the same time became the second phase in the conflict between the papacy and the emperor. Otto of Freising (c. 1110–1185), a close relative of Frederick Barbarossa, the anonymous writer of the so-called *Ludus de Antichristo*, as well as Joachim of Fiore (with his *Commentary on Isaiah*) were probably the writers who became the most significant representatives of the imperial apocalyptic propaganda.²¹⁶ Today, the

213 Magdalino 2005, 49.

214 The Ecclesiastical History 1968–1980/IV, 34; Magdalino 2005, 49 and n. 47.

215 Magdalino 2005, 49.

216 For further details, see McGinn 1979b, 117–121, 178–179.

text of *Ludus de Antichristo* can be seen in a single surviving manuscript in the Benedictine monastery of Tegernsee in Bavaria; it was probably composed about 1160 somewhere in Southern Germany. According to Bernard McGinn, this text was heavily dependent on Adso of Montier-en-Der and on Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, and as such was a pro-imperial account of the *End of Times*, which attributed a very secondary role to the pope in this same *End*.²¹⁷

In the text, Otto of Freising claims that the German emperor had conquered the world, subjecting the French king and recalling the kings (*sic*) of the Greeks and of Jerusalem to obedience. The king of Babylon (i.e. of the 'Ishmaelites'—*Author's note*) attacked Jerusalem, continues Otto, but was defeated by the emperor, who then fulfilled the traditional role of the Last World Emperor by giving up his crown.²¹⁸ It should be noted, however, that unlike earlier accounts, here the emperor "does not die" after laying down his crown on Golgotha, but resumes his role "as the king of the Germans".²¹⁹ Moreover, Otto writes that the king of Jerusalem, as well as the Frankish king had agreed to become men of Antichrist, but that in the end the German emperor succeeded in defeating all those Evil Forces of Antichrist, including the king of Babylon.²²⁰ According to Otto of Freising, after defeating the "king of Babylon", the emperor entered the Temple of Jerusalem together with his people and took part in the Mass. After that he laid down his crown, his scepter and the imperial globe before the altar and began to sing: "Receive what I am offering! With a bounteous heart I resign the Empire to You, King of Kings, through Whom all rulers reign. You alone can be called Emperor and are ruler of all things". Having placed his insignia on the altar, the emperor returned "to the throne of his ancient realm", i.e. the German royal throne, while the clergy that had accompanied him to Jerusalem stayed on in the Holy Sepulcher.²²¹

It seems that Otto of Freising, with his ideas of Frederick Barbarossa returning from Jerusalem on the imperial throne, after having left his imperial insignia on the altar of the most important temple in Jerusalem, shows "considerable originality" not only in adopting a new genre in order to promulgate his message among his readers,²²² but also in numerous and significant details concerning the fate of the Last Emperor—details that cannot be found in the original text of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara.

217 McGinn 1979b, 117.

218 McGinn 1979b, 117.

219 McGinn 1979b, 117.

220 McGinn 1979b, 118; see the text of *Ludus de Antichristo* in McGinn 1979b, 119–121.

221 McGinn 1979b, 119.

222 McGinn 1979b, 118.

Otto of Freising was interested not only in the Third Crusade, led by his relative, Frederick Barbarossa, in 1189–1190, but also in the Second Crusade from 1147. Otto claimed that, in accordance with the Sibylline prophecies, one of the leaders of the crusade, the French king Louis VII (reigned 1137–1180), was supposed to attack not only Babylon, but also Constantinople.²²³

Another West European author, Odo of Deuil, shared this view, stating that during the Second Crusade in the fall of 1147, some members of Louis' entourage proposed an attack on the Byzantine capital Constantinople. The most active one among them appears to have been the Bishop of Lingonensis (Langres), who, together with several other men, tried to persuade the king and the pilgrims to unite with the enemy of Manuel I Komnenos, King Roger II (1130–1154), who constantly stripped the Byzantine basileus of his domains in the southern part of the Apennines. The king of Sicily was supposed to give his consent and provide Louis VII with his fleet so that they could attack Constantinople with joint efforts. In the opinion of the Bishop of Langres, the capital's walls were weak and if the city aqueducts stopped supplying its inhabitants with water, the fall of the city would just be a matter of time. Conquering this most rich and beautiful Christian city would lead to the quick subordination of the basileus' remaining domains to Frankish rule; the latter would, undoubtedly, be a godly deed, since the Byzantines were "Christian only in name", as the Bishop of Langres put it. Although some members of the entourage agreed with his words, most of the king's men did not warm up to the bold ideas of the bishop and his suggestion was rejected. Odo says, among other things, that they responded as follows: "At this time we can attack the richest of the Christian cities and enrich ourselves, but in so doing we must kill and be killed".²²⁴

And another example from Western Europe, illustrating the knowledge about the habitat of the 'unclean peoples', this time dating from the 12th century. It is actually a description of a *mappa mundi* ("Descriptio mappe (*sic*) mundi"), made by Hugo of Saint Victor (the first half of the 12th century) and called "the first geographical treatise of the Middle Ages".²²⁵ There, the peoples of Gog and Magog were located on an island north of Asia, opposite "the region of the Amazons". Later, after the inclusion of the so-called kingdom of Prester John in the geographical descriptions made by the Western Europeans of the 13th century, the land of Gog and Magog was placed in Asia. The Christian

223 Magdalino 2005, 50; Delumeau 1995, 40–41.

224 Odo de Deogilo 1885, libri III et IV; Odo of Deuil 1948, 68–71—cited from Magdalino 2005, 50; Odo de Deuil 2012, 53, 56, 60–62.

225 Delumeau 1992, 120 and n. 57.

world was outlined first, followed by that of Islam, and only then, and quite vaguely, were positioned the Amazons, the land of Gog and Magog, the kingdom of Prester John and lastly, on a high peak, was the earthly Paradise.²²⁶

2.3.3 *The Case of Kievan Rus'*

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Prince Vladimir († 1015) established Christianity as the 'state religion' of Kievan Rus' in 988/989. It is clear then that at the end of the 10th century, the Rus' could not have been seriously influenced by the perception of the impending *End of the world* in 992, a perception that had many followers among the learned population of both Byzantium and Bulgaria. Things became quite different during the following, 11th century, when a truly worthy enemy appeared along the borders of Rus'—the Cumans. The Rus' lands had already endured attacks by nomads from the same direction in the past, including the Pechenegs at the end of the 10th century (attacks on Pereiaslavl in 988 and 992 and in 997—on Belgorod). Prince Vladimir began a campaign to build a line of fortresses to protect his lands south of Kiev namely against these nomadic attacks. The Rus', however, dealt with the Pecheneg threat quite swiftly. Prince Iaroslav the Wise succeeded in defeating the Pechenegs somewhere near Kiev already in 1036, and this defeat probably prompted them to direct their attacks to the west and southwest, towards the Danube River.²²⁷ So it was no coincidence that from the 1030s onwards, the Pechenegs gained a permanent place in the Byzantine chronicles, and especially in the historical apocalyptic texts from the Bulgarian lands, discussed at length here (see here, Chapter 3).

And yet, were the Pecheneg raids against Kievan Rus' reflected in the local written sources of the 11th–12th centuries, in view of the *End of the world* as perceived through the prism of the years 992 and 1092? This question is quite important, and its answer even more so, to help determine whether the Rus' viewed the Pechenegs as their '*arch-enemy*' before the *End*. As can be seen from the analysis of several texts in the present study, the Pechenegs, Turks/Oghuz and the other steppe nomads were all known to the Rus' and appear in the entry under the year 1096, for instance. Nonetheless, they did not become the '*arch-enemy*' or '*arch-evil*' in the eyes of Kievan Rus'.

In a well-known text, usually called the *Primary Chronicle* (in the Russian original it is known as *Povest' vremennykh let*, literally *Tale of Years Past*), the writer was notably interested not only in the beginning of this world, but

²²⁶ Delumeau 1992, 120.

²²⁷ Zimonyi 2013, 100; for a general overview of the Pechenegs, see, for instance, Diaconu 1970; Bozhilov 1971, 170–175; Golden 1990, 270–275; Romashov 1999, 21–35.

also of the end of human history on earth.²²⁸ Although this chronicle has already been discussed in this book, I would nevertheless like to emphasize some significant details here. At first glance, it may seem odd that in the chronicle, the beginning of Rus'ian history was 'attached' to the reign of the basileus Michael III (842–867), a fact that has nothing to do with the real history of the Rus', but rather with their imaginary perception of their own historical destiny and predestination. This apparent discrepancy is not difficult to explain: as was noted above, in 860, the Varangian Rus' besieged Constantinople by sea for the first time. This is why, according to the anonymous Rus'ian chronicler, the name "Rus' land" first came to be in the "year 6360, indict 15, when Michael came to reign".²²⁹ Of course, Michael III did not begin his rule in 860, but the Rus'ian writer deemed it more important to connect the beginning of the history of Rus' with the history of the world that was presented, following the old tradition, as a series of four empires, the last one of which, quite understandably, was the Byzantine one.

The name of this same basileus, Michael, was especially appealing for the chronicler, as it was also associated with the notions of the Last Emperor, according to some apocalyptic works incorporating the emblematic *topoi* from Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara's *Apocalypse*. Thus, the Rus'ian chronicler had quite purposefully wanted to present the beginning of the history of Rus' in an eschatological 'key' and by doing so to incorporate it in the eschatological model of the 'four kingdoms', well known from the Old Testament prophecies of Daniel.²³⁰

The same text also contains a number of significant names from the Bible, including Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, etc., as well as Alexander the Great, Jesus Christ, Constantine the Great, and also the names of the world empires in particular. In yet another seemingly strange choice by the *Primary Chronicle's* author, the emperor Constantine, who was termed Equal to the apostles, is followed in this namelist by Michael III ("from Alexander to the birth of Christ, 333 years; and from the birth of Christ to Constantine, 318 years; from Constantine to this Michael, 524 years"). Moreover, the passage from the *Primary Chronicle* ends as follows: "And from the first year of Michael to the first year of Oleg, the Rus'ian prince, 29 years".²³¹ This listing of personal names and years is too interesting for our topic to be overlooked. It is clear, that the author of the *Primary Chronicle* deemed it necessary for Alexander the Great

228 For further details, see Danilevskii 1995, 101–110 and esp. 105; Petrukhin 2011, 137–139.

229 *Povest' Vremennykh Let* 1950/1, 17; Danilevskii 1995, 105.

230 See Petrukhin 2011, 137–138.

231 *Povest' Vremennykh Let* 1950/1, 17.

to be included in the sacred, in actuality Old-and-New-Testamental (and also historical) model of the world as he knew it.

In the aforementioned text, written by an anonymous monk from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery, under the year 1096 it is mentioned that Kiev and its hinterland were devastated by the *Polovtsy*, i.e. the Cumans. The latter were described there as “the sons of Ismael”, who emerged from the Nitrian (*sic*) Desert, i.e. from (Saudi) Arabia (and Medina—*Author’s note*) to attack and plunder the southern Rus’ian lands and, in particular, Kiev. According to the anonymous author of this text, from their tribe (the Ismaelite one—*Author’s note*) came the *Tortmeny* (*sic*) (i.e. the Turkmen—*Author’s note*) and the Pechenegs, as well as the Torks (i.e. the Oghuz—*Author’s note*) and the Cumans.²³² Even more important to note is that the monk included the following information in the text: allegedly, Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara himself had written about those same Cumans; a claim that, quite understandably, cannot correspond to the historical truth, since the Cumans were not known as a separate and distinct political entity during the creation of his *Apocalypse* in the 7th century and thus could not have entered the text of the Syrian author.

According to the Rus’ian chroniclers, the attacks of the “Godless *Polovtsy*” in the 1090s came to be mostly due to the internal conflicts between the various Rus’ian princes, whether because of land disputes or disagreements about the way power was inherited, that in Kiev in particular. The sacking of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery by the Cumans became possible after the refusal of one of these princes, Oleg Sviatoslavich, to help his cousins with troops against the pagan Cumans.²³³ Against the backdrop of the ‘external’ successes, especially those in the field of Christian faith, which were representative of the times of Prince Vladimir and his son, Iaroslav the Wise, the years following the last decade of the 11th century, particularly in view of the expected *End* around 1092, seemed deserving of ‘apocalyptic’ misery. It is no coincidence then that the Cumans were modeled in this text in accordance with the cliché of the ‘unclean peoples of Gog and Magog’ and those of the so-called Ishmaelites, in particular.²³⁴

In this same text, under the year 1096 the Rus’ian author mentions the Volga Bulgars and the Khwarazmians (called *Khvalisi* in the text) as people stemming from the biblical Ammon and Moab, respectively; the latter lived not far from Rus’. It has been long known that by the end of the 11th century, both the

232 *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* 1962/1, Stb. 231–232, 233–234.

233 Shepard 2012, 291.

234 On the eschatological themes in the *Primary Chronicle*, see Danilevskii 2004, 235–240, 257–258; see also Shepard 2012, 291.

Volga Bulgars and the Khwarazmians that dwelled by the Caspian Sea had long been Muslims. Thus, it is clear that for the unknown monk of the Lavra monastery, his Christian Rus' seemed to be surrounded by enemies, be it Muslims (i.e. the Volga Bulgars and the Khwarazmians, and also the Saracens), or the 'unclean peoples' Gog and Magog, traditionally associated with the steppe and the 'Scythian peoples'. It can be reasonably assumed that the picture, outlined by the monk, was an adequate illustration of the perception that in the *Last Times*, Rus' would be attacked either by the 'Ishmaelites' or by 'Gog and Magog', thus fulfilling the prophecy regarding Antichrist and Judgment Day. This would mean that Rus' was thought of as the *center* of the Christian world, which, in accordance with the biblical metatext, was supposed to be attacked by the *arch*-enemies from the north (the 'unclean peoples Gog and Magog'). At the time, the late 11th century and around the year 1092 in particular, the latter were mainly the Cumans (and some subordinated, mostly Turkic-speaking tribes) that had been inhabiting the steppe north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov at least from the second half of the 11th century.

This hostile environment surrounding the 'Holy Rus' can be discerned, as a notion and a perception, by referencing the Old Testament and the prophecies of Daniel in particular, as well as later prophecies, like those of the so-called Tiburtine Sibyl, for instance. Mostly, however, it can be derived from the fundamental text which has already been the subject of our special attention: the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. As can be expected from this kind of writings, however, the names of the peoples in the Rus'ian text differ from the biblical ones!

And another interesting fact, again from the same text and found under the year 1096, that can be mentioned here in view of the topic at hand and be of interest for analysis. It is the direction from which God's punishment was expected to come. For the unknown Rus'ian monk, the archetypal direction of the invading *evil* was irrelevant, and so it, like the names of the peoples, was changed. It is known that in relation to Kievan Rus', the steppe was located in the south; this means that from the viewpoint of the biblical metatext, the Cumans could not have been perceived as 'people of the north'. Perhaps this manipulation of Eastern Europe's real geography became possible partly because of the actual positioning of the Cumans on the geographical map: during the period between the 11th and the 13th centuries, they inhabited the area north of the Caucasus and near the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. And it was here, next to the Caucasus mountain range that, according to the ancient legend, the Iron Gate of Alexander the Great could be found, erected to stop the 'barbarians' and the 'unclean peoples' of the steppe, Gog and Magog. Apparently, for the 11th-century monk from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery (and maybe

for the learned circles of Rus' from the 11th–12th centuries as a whole?) the nomads were seen as the *arch*-enemy and, being pagans, identified as Gog and Magog. At the same time, however, judging from this same entry under the year 1096, they were also marked as 'Ishmaelites', i.e. Muslims. Here, we have come across a sort of mixing of the *temporal* and the *spatial* (the latter in the meaning of *topos/locus*), as well as a specific doubling of the image of the 'nomad': the latter was not only one of the so-called 'Scythian peoples' that inhabited the steppes north of the Caucasus Mountains, but also of the 'Saracens' from Arabia. After this long analysis of accounts from the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery, it must be noted that the monks of this monastery were visibly distinct from other representatives of the clerical elite in Kievan Rus' in the 11th–12th centuries; in contrast to the latter, they did not profess the same type of 'religious optimism' that was so typical of Rus' at the time.²³⁵

And another interesting fact in relation to the Cuman attacks against Kievan Rus' in 1096: they occurred at the same time as the actual start of the First Crusade, when the crusaders marched on Jerusalem.²³⁶ It is a whole other matter whether the anonymous author from the Lavra monastery knew anything at all about this Crusade, and whether—if he indeed did know something—he made any associations with the *actual* conquest of the *actual* Jerusalem by the knights in 1099. Or, rather, was he fascinated with the *imaginary* Jerusalem, which, as a learned monk, he should have naturally associated with the 'sacred-and-holy Rus'ian land'.²³⁷

The Cumans attacking from the south became the object of a similar treatment also in an entry from 1111 (available only in the *Ipatiev Chronicle*). Without specifically mentioning the work of Hippolytus of Rome (3rd century), *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*, known in Kievan Rus' from a 12th-century translation, the Rus'ian author nevertheless used his interpretations of the *Book of Daniel* to chronicle the battle of the Rus' against the Cumans in the same 'key' with regard to the signs before the *End of Times*.²³⁸

In conclusion, it seems much more likely that during the period up to the end of the 12th century, the Rus', in the true spirit of the medieval mentality and paradigms, were far more intrigued by the *signs* of the *End of the world*, marked by various 'wondrous' and strange omens and portents, as well as

235 Alekseev 2002, 57.

236 Karpov 2002, 11.

237 For more details on this subject, see Karpov 2002, 11–12; see also Danilevskii 1999, 134–139, 141; on the 'Heavenly Jerusalem' in Western Europe see Kühnel 1987; Kobielus 1995, 101–115; on the image of the 'Heavenly Jerusalem' in Rus' and in Eastern Orthodoxy in general, see Lidov 1994, 15–33.

238 *Polnoe Sobranie russkikh letopisei* 1998/11, stb. 271–273; Karpov 2002, 6.

by the various invaders in their lands (initially mainly the Cumans, but later, after the 1220s, also the Mongols and Tatars), than by such an emblematic moment from the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara as that of the Last Emperor and his ties to the holy center Jerusalem before the *End of Times*.

2.3.4 *In the Islamic World (the Case of Volga Bulgaria)*

Before delving into the case of the Volga Bulgars, it seems appropriate to once again turn our attention to the geographical tradition that was typical for the Islamic world in the Middle Ages. Where did it place these 'unclean peoples'? Were they situated in accordance with the well-known concept/system of the *climes*, which was in fact drawn from Hellenistic geography? The answer to this question would yet again have to be positive. Here are some additional examples in support of the above point.

The astronomer al-Farghani († after 861) claimed that "the seventh climate begins in the east, in the north of the lands of Gog and Magog, and extends to the land of the Turks".²³⁹ Another writer, Ibn Rustah (10th century) said that "the fifth clime begins in the land of Gog and Magog in the east and passes [immediately] into Khurasan; the sixth clime begins in the land of Magog and passes over the land of the Khazars; the seventh clime begins in the east with the Northern Gog, passes over the land of the Turks ...".²⁴⁰ The aforementioned al-Tabari in turn claimed that "coming back from the West, 'the two-horned one' (Alexander the Great—*Author's* note) went to the east via Tibet. He constructed the barrier of Gog and Magog between two high mountains ...".²⁴¹

Furthermore, the climates in this tradition, as well as the peoples of Gog and Magog are directly related to the paradigm of Alexander the Great! The famous ruler of Ancient Macedonia was the only one among the Hellenes who would eventually receive a special place in the Quran (Sura XVIII, 82–102; Sura XXI, 96). The Russian researcher Sharif Shukurov recently argued that writers from various Islamic centers had attempted to introduce *trans*-cultural and *trans*-temporal characteristics in the image of Alexander the Great, who appeared in some Arabic texts under the name of Iskander, or the 'two-horned one'. It seems to me that we will not be wrong in also adding *trans*-regional characteristics in this case, as some data from Volga Bulgaria provides grounds for such a supposition.

²³⁹ Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 89–90.

²⁴⁰ Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 91.

²⁴¹ Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 91; on these traditions in Arab-Persian literature, esp. in view of Khazaria, Gog and Magog, etc., also see Kalinina, Flerov, Petrukhin 2014, 18–26.

Ever since the times before the Islamization of vast regions in Asia and North Africa, the territory of Alexander was perceived as stretching from Hellas and the Balkans as a whole to the west, and to Asia Minor, Persia and partly North India to the east. In the south, it reached Egypt and the Near East. Of course, for the purposes of the present study, the most important thing would be to specify the 'natural' northern boundary of this territory: as has already become clear, it was the Caucasus mountain range, thought to reach eastward to the Amu Darya River in Central Asia (present-day Pamir—Hindu Kush). In this expanse, Alexander the Great appeared as a truly demiurgic figure, as a 'world shaper', creating a unified and civilized territory with clear characteristics and marked above all by the establishment of a number of cities bearing the name "Alexandria". This city, located in the farthest northeastern parts, was quite appropriately called Alexandria Eschata, or 'Alexandria the Farthest' (literally, "Alexandria at the end"). These specific, essentially urban in nature, characteristics of the new Alexander-centric expanse would undergo an interesting development during a later time period and in Volga Bulgaria, in particular.

Once the figure of Alexander/Iskander as a prophet, ideal ruler and demiurge was established by the early Islamic authors, it appeared that in Volga Bulgaria during the Middle Ages and particularly from the 10th century onwards, it was no longer that difficult 'to forget' the actual and most distant from Ancient Greece and Macedonia points that Alexander the Great and his armies had reached during his eastern campaigns. This led to the spread of notions among the Volga Bulgars that the civilizational boundary, set by Alexander, was not along the Caucasus Mountains, but much further north, almost by Ural. The Volga Bulgars began to see themselves as the northern outpost of this civilizational, *Alexander-centric* core. Indeed, at an *imaginative* level, the Volga Bulgars made a connection between the Mediterranean and the Middle East, i.e. the places where the dimensions of the civilization of Alexander the Great and his direct successors are reasonably sought, and the region of the Volga and Kama Rivers where the Bulgars themselves lived from as early as the 8th century. Hence, in their view, the Caucasus Mountains were no longer the old barrier against the peoples of Gog and Magog, i.e. the world of barbarism; instead, that role now belonged to their own state along the Volga and Kama Rivers.

From the 920s, the local Bulgars became Muslims, i.e. 'people of the Book', while those tribes that lived north of Volga Bulgaria remained pagans. They were the ones to be fought, in order to expand the boundaries of the 'righteous' territory of the Quran until the ends of the universe. To the north (and in some versions, also to the east, near the historical Kyrgyz) was the country of

Darkness and of the great giants, mentioned by a number of Islamic authors, as well by the Quran (on the latter, see here, Chapter 3). That was where the already mentioned peoples Yajuj and Majuj lived.²⁴²

All these connections can be clearly seen in various accounts left by Islamic authors. Abu Hamid al-Garnati, for instance, visited Volga Bulgaria in the mid-12th century and recorded something quite curious: the Volga Bulgars, he wrote, believed that "Iskander passed through the city of Bulgar on his way to Gog and Magog".²⁴³ Another 12th-century author, Najib al-Hamadani, wrote that "in the city of Bulgar lived their padishah, who was one of the descendants of Zu-l-Qarnain", i.e. Alexander/Iskander.²⁴⁴ A different source, a chronicle from medieval Rus', mentions the existence of a legend among the Volga Bulgars, according to which the city of Oshel was built by Alexander the Great.²⁴⁵

Obviously, in the 12th century at the latest, in the eyes of the Volga Bulgars, Alexander the Great acquired not only the reputation of a creator of civilizational spaces and a city builder, but also that of the originator of the ruling dynasty of Volga Bulgaria.²⁴⁶ This process does not seem strange in view of the increased interest, expressed by the Muslim learned men towards the image and the heritage of Alexander the Great during the 11th–12th centuries. It seems that Iskander Izmailov may be right in his assertion that the "advance" of the Volga Bulgars and their rulers towards the Quranic pantheon through Alexander, and, as a legacy from him—the hero/ideal king/prophet—also the main urban centers there, led to the increased prestige of the dynasty and the nation as a whole in their own eyes. It made them into 'royal', ancient people and also, to a great extent, into heirs of the glory and the vast empire of the Macedonian ruler.²⁴⁷

It could, therefore, be concluded that after the adoption of Islam, the Volga Bulgars began to view their state not only as part of the Alexandrian territories *par excellence*, but also as an imaginary Caucasus, an imaginary 'barrier of Alexander' against the 'unclean peoples' of the North, Gog and Magog. It is also worth noting that up until the 7th century, these same Volga Bulgars had inhabited the lands north of the Caucasus or the Caucasus mountain range itself, as well as near the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov (i.e. beyond the 'barrier of Alexander'). In other words, they had lived in the very area that was

242 See also Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, *passim*; Kalinina 2010, 119–123; Kalinina 2011.

243 Puteshtestvie Abu Khamida al-Garnati 1971, 59.

244 Kovalevskii 1956, 61.

245 Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei 1965, 331; Stepanov 2003, 16.

246 Izmailov 2000, 100.

247 Izmailov 2000, 101.

seemingly assigned as the place for the ‘Scythian peoples’ Gog and Magog. In addition to this, at the time the majority of the Bulgars were pagans! It was not until the 8th century that a part of these Bulgars migrated north and settled along the middle reaches of the Volga and Kama Rivers. During the 920s, with the adoption of Islam, the Volga Bulgars seemed to ‘cleanse’ themselves from their past, which gave them the opportunity to enter the imaginary, but also the actual realm of the civilized ‘people of the Book’. Thus, with the help of a mental, imaginary ‘manoeuvre’, the Volga Bulgars, who until the early 10th century had been outside of Alexander’s space, became a truly civilized people through the act of Islamization. They also became a people with a mission: to protect, but also to push-and-expand the boundaries of the civilized world. In this way Volga Bulgaria, as if solely by the fact of its inclusion into the world of Islam, entered without difficulty the space where the deeds and exploits of Alexander the Great unfolded.

The Volga Bulgars added important aspects to the symbolic and essentially unreal space, modeled after the paradigm of Alexander the Great. In truth, Volga Bulgaria achieved an imaginary ‘translocation’, a sort of *translatio*, to the north of the well-known Caucasus barrier (=the northern border of Civilization) towards its farthest borders, i.e. towards the tribes of Visu/Wisu, Muroma, Erzya, Chud’ et al., mentioned by Ibn Fadlan in the 920s.²⁴⁸ Thus, the Bulgars along the Kama and Volga Rivers became the northernmost point of the new, imaginary and in certain aspects symbolic Mediterranean *macrokosmos*, which was modified and in effect ‘invented’ by the learned men of Volga Bulgaria. It seems hardly necessary to prove that in such a situation their lands were perceived as the sacred and holy lands of Allah.

2.3.5 *In the Jewish Diaspora, 10th–12th Centuries*

For many centuries, the two outermost parts of Europe—Spain (the Arab Caliphate of Cordoba) and the coasts of the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea, as well as north of the Caucasus, territories that at the time were within the Khazar Khaganate—were inhabited by a numerous Jewish or Judaized population. The latter refers specifically to Khazaria during the period between the 8th and the 10th centuries, when the local aristocratic elite adopted Judaism as the state religion.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Ibn Fadlan 1992, 47, 54, 57.

²⁴⁹ See more in Dunlop 1954 [1967]; Shepard 1998, 9–34; Pritsak 1978, 261–281; Golden 2007, 123–162; Novosel’tsev 1990; Stepanov 2005b; Stepanov 2010; Kovalev 2005, 220–253; Zhivkov 2011; Zhivkov 2015.

During the 10th century, the European Jewish population openly manifested displays of Messianism, associated with the idea of restoring the Kingdom of Israel in the *Last Times*. It is important to note that the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara had an extraordinary influence not only on the Christians during the Middle Ages, but also on some educated Jews. For instance, they held in high esteem the figure of the Last (Byzantine) Emperor before the *End of the world*, which first appeared in this form—as the ‘answer’ to the Islamic threat—in the work of Pseudo-Methodius, as has already been noted numerous times in this book. Here, I will mention but one of these knowledgeable in eschatology and apocalypticism educated Jews, who further developed the above-mentioned motif: Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai and his “Signs” (the number seven sign).

Although the “Signs” are hard to be dated precisely, they were certainly written after the Muslim successes following the 630s; the work has survived in a single transcript, which can be found in the Cairo *Genizah*. Naturally, the return of the crown by the Last Christian Emperor and its placement on the Calvary Cross before the coming of Antichrist and the *End of the world* needed a certain remodeling in order to work in a Jewish environment, and this was achieved by Simeon bar Yochai with the help of a small change in the scenario: instead of the Cross, the crown would be placed on the main stone of the Temple of Solomon. This stone had a special symbolic meaning in the rabbinic literature and law. But more important in this case is the fact that the scenario itself and the whole ‘salvational’ scheme, outlined by Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, had a particularly strong influence on some well-educated Jewish men. Moreover, Simeon bar Yochai wrote not only “*Signs*”, but at least one more work with apocalyptic adaptations of both old Jewish texts (*Sefer Zerubbabel*) and Christian motifs, called “*Secrets*”.²⁵⁰

Let us, however, return to Khazaria. Hasdai ben Yitzhak Shaprut (his full name according to both Jewish and Arabic sources being Hasdai ben Yitzhak ibn Shaprut—*Author’s note*), the Jewish *major-domo* of the Caliph of Cordoba, Abd-ar-Rahman III (912–961), associated such expectations regarding the coming of the Messiah with the Khazar Khaganate, as will become apparent from the following passages. His correspondence with the Khazar khagan bek, Joseph (in the mid-10th century, but before 965), contains the phrase “kingdom of the Khazars”: “There is a kingdom of Jews which is called al-Khazar”.²⁵¹ Let us note that at that time, the Khazar territories generally extended to the north of the Caucasus Mountains, i.e. in the exact steppe region that,

²⁵⁰ For further details, see Himmelfarb 2010, 133–135; Collins 1987, 334–336.

²⁵¹ On the correspondence, see Kokovtsov 1932.

after Flavius Josephus, was traditionally seen as ‘the land of Gog and Magog’. Whether Hasdai ben Shaprut made similar associations, is not clear from his letter. According to Boris Rashkovskii, the latter treated the Khazars as real, true Jews quite purposefully, linking them to one of the Ten Tribes of Israel, although knowing full well that the ‘traditional’ Khazars were not connected to the Near and the Middle East, but to steppe Eurasia.²⁵² In other words, they belonged more to the Turkic-speaking nomadic and semi-sedentary world of the so-called Great Steppe than to the ancient Near East, the initial homeland of the chosen people of Israel.

There is no need to specifically comment on the well-known fact that the Karaite movement obtained its final form during the 9th–10th centuries in the countries of the Islamic world. During these two centuries, the main Karaite centers were concentrated both in Iraq and in Iran, and later—in Palestine.²⁵³ Subsequently, the Crimean Peninsula, which was dominated by the Khazars from the late 7th century to the mid-10th century, became one of the major centers of the Karaites.²⁵⁴

Of significant interest for our topic is the afore-mentioned Daniel al-Kumisi, one of the representatives of the Karaite ‘wing’ of Jerusalem in the 10th century. I would like to mention once more that his appeal to send five men from every city to Jerusalem is very reminiscent of a similar appeal from a later anonymous text with a very distinctive title, namely, *Midrash of the Messiah King and Gog and Magog* that appeared in France in the 13th century. In it, the call was for “a man from every city and two from a family” to gather in Israel, so that the expectation for the coming Messiah before the *Last Times* may be fulfilled.²⁵⁵ The last words are, in fact, a reference to the Old Testament, where the Lord calls for His children to return to the Promised Land, for He will take from them one man from each city, and two from each family, and will take them to Zion. Actually, this passage is a retelling from the prophet Jeremiah (3:14), as was pointed out in Chapter 1. ‘Zion’ here signifies that the prophecy was referring to the Promised Land of the Jews, which would subsequently become the ‘Holy Land’ for both Christianity and Islam. And its center—the real, as well as the imaginary one—was, of course, the city of Jerusalem.

These two sources from the Jewish milieu clearly indicate that, with the approach of the year 1000, just as in Byzantium, among the educated Jews of the Caliphate of Cordoba emerged the view of the ‘dual’ Holy Land: the first

252 Rashkovskii 2011; Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 218–220.

253 Rashkovskii 2012–2013, 204.

254 See Kizilov 2011.

255 Iuval’ 1999, 220–221; see also Friedman 1996, 139.

being in the initial, 'original' Israel in the Near East, and the second one—paradoxically enough—in the lands north of the Caucasus, which were under Khazar rule at that time. This could be called a kind of 'conforming' to the *Realpolitik* of the times and, in general, to the political context of the European continent of that time.

The Jews make an appearance once more in the mid-10th century, and again in the same context of Gog and Magog and the *End of Times*, in the above-mentioned *Letter on the Hungarians*. There, after asking, '*Si ergo Hungri sunt Gog et Magog, ubi sunt gentes istae quae cum eis uenire dicuntur?*'²⁵⁶ the anonymous author claims that some Jews, as well as people from Europe that have been influenced by their customs and traditions

[*Iudei et quidam nostrorum iudaizantes*], 'computant Gog gentes esse Scithicas immamanes et innumerabilis quae trans Caucasum montem et Meotidem paludem iuxta Caspium mare ad Indiam usque tendantur. eos post mille annorum tempus putant a diabolo <lo>co mouendas ut ueniant in terram Israel et regnent contra sanctos multis secum gentibus congregates, de quibus etiam in Apocalypsis Iohannis dicitur: cum finite fuerunt mille anni, ...'²⁵⁷

It is clear from these words that in Western Europe in the second half of the 10th century could be found some Jewish scholars who were quite adept at calculating time. And that they were willing to connect the prophecies from the Bible, namely the ones referring to the invasion of Gog and Magog into the Promised Land around the year 1000, to the Magyar hordes that were invading Western Europe. As is stated in this *Letter*, the learned Jewish men also had their followers among the Christians. But such apocalyptic expectations among the Jewry, which were directly related to the coming of the Messiah, were actually nothing new. They were well-documented also in the 7th century, for instance, in particular in Byzantium,²⁵⁸ and also around the year 1009, when Caliph al-Hakim ordered for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem to be destroyed, which decision was followed by anti-Jewish pogroms and killings in Western Europe.²⁵⁹

256 Huygens 1957, 232.

257 Huygens 1957, 232.

258 Van Bekkum 2002, 96–112; especially on the years of the rule of Heraclius (610–641) and, in particular, the 620s–630s, see Sharf 1971, 43–57.

259 Landes 1996, 79–112; Callahan 2008, 41–57.

After the Fatimids conquered Jerusalem in the 970s, this holy city, along with the rest of the country, suffered a period of slow decline, which was also due to the uprisings there in the course of the following 11th century. Due to this course of events, the Jews of Fustat in Egypt, which at that time was the center of the authorities, gained the opportunity to become a leading force in the region. This situation lasted until the 16th century. So it is not strange that one of the traditional feasts, called *Sukkot* (“*Feast of tabernacles/Festival of booths*”) and celebrated annually in the autumn, when the Jewish pilgrims came to worship in Jerusalem and formed a special procession, is so indicative of our case: the last time this procession in the holy Jewish city was mentioned was in the year 1062.

The feast of *Sukkot* is the culmination of the three pilgrimage festivals and lasted for a whole seven days; it was also called “the season of our joy” in the liturgies. It was intended as a reminiscence of the fragile dwellings where the Jews lived during their exodus from Egypt. It was no coincidence that the symbol of this feast was the *sukka*, or “tabernacle”, a temporary hut with three walls and no permanent roof, with only a cover of hay and leaves in its stead. All meals during the seven days of *Sukkot* had to be eaten in such unstable dwellings. In the Middle Ages, the Jewish thinkers viewed the command to live in perishable and temporary dwellings such as the tabernacles as a reminder of the transience of material possessions. According to the Jewish mystics, during the seven days of the feast, these tabernacles (*sukkot*) were visited by a number of extraordinary figures (from the Old Testament), like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, David. Particularly significant symbolic actions were performed on the seventh day of the *Sukkot*.²⁶⁰ The above-mentioned procession usually passed through the city of Jerusalem, around the gates of the Temple Mount, and up the Mount of Olives. In 1081, this procession and the feasts itself took place in Tyre.²⁶¹

In 1096, during the years of the First Crusade, messianic expectations spread among the Jewry once more, and this time they were clearly visible in the Byzantine Empire and in Thessaloniki in particular. As reported in a letter from the Cairo *Genizah*, dated 8 July 1096, the local Jewish community of Thessaloniki ceased to perform its usual labor duties, as well as to pay taxes to the Treasury. Instead, the Jews began to seek opportunities to sell whatever they owned and then to follow the Crusaders on their route to the Promised Land. This messianic worldview and appeal spread also to other cities of the

260 For further details, see Jacobs 1987, 131–132, s.v. ‘sukkot’.

261 Friedman 1996, 139–141.

Empire, including Constantinople and Abydos.²⁶² Almost at the same time, but on the Crimean Peninsula (in the original text of the letter it is called “Khazaria”, although it is clear that its author was referring to the Byzantine territories of the peninsula—*Author’s note*), seventeen of the local Jewish communities decided to leave their settlements and to move to the “wilderness of the infidels” (*cf.* Ez. 20:35, “the wilderness of the peoples”), i.e. to the lands of ancient Israel.²⁶³

From another, undated letter of the same *Genizah*, which can be tied to the rule of the vizier of Egypt, al-Afdal (1094–1121), it becomes clear that at the time, Messianism had also spread among the Jews in the former Khazaria. According to Douglas Dunlop, this happened again in the lands of the Crimean Peninsula, in its mountainous part, where some people arrived, self-described as important, including the prophet Elijah, whose son was called the Messiah (*sic*); one of these people was rumored to have come from Jerusalem. These people wrote letters to the Jews who lived both nearby and far away, that the long-awaited time had finally come and that the Lord was ready to gather His people in the holy city of Jerusalem.²⁶⁴

Compared to most of the Jews who adhered to Rabbinic Judaism and who left Jerusalem in the 1070s, the Karaites remained in the holy city until it was captured by the knights of the First Crusade in 1099. They claimed that for a Jew, it was of particular importance to live in this city.²⁶⁵

After 1099, however, hard times began for the Jews in the city of Jerusalem, and many left. According to two prominent Jewish pilgrims, Benjamin of Tudela and Petahiah of Regensburg, who visited the city in the second half of the 12th century, only four Jews could be found there, and they were dyers, in the words of Benjamin of Tudela. Petahiah of Regensburg, who passed through Jerusalem a decade later, noted only one Jew.²⁶⁶ So, in view of the Jewish population of Jerusalem, there was a ‘vacuum’ in the city between the 1070s and 1187, when Jerusalem again fell into Islamic hands, this time those of Sultan Saladin. After 1187 this same Saladin encouraged the Jews to return to the city and to settle permanently there.

Could the fact of Jerusalem’s almost complete depopulation of Jews during the period between the 1070s and 1187 mean that Jewish Messianism had ‘shrunk’ to its lowest possible level? If we were to accept the testimonies of

262 Starr 1939, 203–208; Karpov 2002, 11.

263 Karpov 2002, 11.

264 Dunlop 1954, 255.

265 On the Karaites, see the fundamental study of Zvi Ankori 1959, repr. 1968.

266 Benjamin of Tudela 1987, 82–86; Friedman 1996, 141–142.

both Benjamin of Tudela and Petahiah as sufficiently reliable, then we would have to agree with such an opinion, namely, that the Jews abstained from an ‘invasion’ into the heart of their original Holy/Promised Land either as peaceful pilgrims, or as peaceful artisans, refraining from making a permanent settlement in this place. This is why, for the Jews the idea to ‘invade’ the city of Jerusalem—in the form of a mass movement—was unthinkable, at least for the period between the 1070s/1099 and 1187. Nevertheless, they did not cease to think of this city, its Temple and the Promised Land in general as something promised to them and as their salvation at the *End of the world*. From ancient times in daily services, the Jews prayed for the Lord to be merciful to the nation of Israel, and to the city of Jerusalem, to Zion, the place of divine glory, and to the Temple, and also to the kingdom of the House of David. In the times of the Roman Empire, Zion, together with its Temple and lands, underwent a process of spiritualization in many of the apocryphal and Qumran manuscripts, as well as in the works of Philo and in some rabbinic texts.²⁶⁷ Thus, the divine, transcendent Jerusalem came to replace the earthly one,²⁶⁸ which means that the Heavenly Jerusalem was already firmly rooted in Jewish thought during the Middle Ages. This is why the aforementioned processes that occurred between the 1070s and 1187 and were characterized by a significant outflow of Jews from Jerusalem could not be considered as seriously damaging this already well-established ‘spiritual map’ of the holy city.



At the end of this chapter, it would be logical to draw some conclusions. Let me begin by commenting on an extensive passage from Anthony D. Smith’s “Chosen Peoples” book, published in 2003. For him, the people that had entered into a covenant with God have a tendency “to turn inwards” and stay away from the “profane world”, and in doing so, by humbly standing in obedience to God, they keep the purity of their faith. On the other hand, the peoples which he calls “missionary” (“peoples with a mission”) are also highly committed to what they define as the one true faith and the word of God, but they also strive to change that world through expansion, either by persuasion, force, or a combination of both. Indeed, says Anthony Smith, at various stages of their history, “chosen peoples” of every kind can be described as oscillating between these two tendencies. Nevertheless, continues Smith, *separation*

²⁶⁷ Smith 2003, 278, n. 11.

²⁶⁸ Smith 2003, 278, n. 11.

and exclusivity (*exclusion*) become the dominant feature of the "covenanted" peoples, while for those with a mission the typical features remain *expansion and inclusion*.²⁶⁹

Although I am aware of this valuable observation and relevant thesis of such a prominent scholar such as Anthony D. Smith, undoubtedly is, in this chapter I have tried not to be too involved with the notion of the 'chosen people', although it is (supposed to be) present in such a study by presumption. Rather, I have been more intrigued by the question of the *directions of invasion into* (a given) Promised-and-Holy Land, as well as the other possibility: to investigate *the direction of an invasion from a given holy land 'outwards'*. The latter is seemingly best seen in the *cases* of the Volga Bulgars and to an extent in Western Europe after 1095/1096. In addition, my interest here was mainly focused on analyzing data from various accounts, based on the idea that Europe and a part of the Middle East were perceived by many medieval intellectuals, both Christian and Muslim, as having common roots and features, as well as intellectual 'traditions', such as the legacy of Alexander the Great, along with that of the three Abrahamic (i.e. monotheistic) religions.

In my opinion and in view of all that was said in this and in the previous chapter, we can outline several new questions with regard to the available information, derived from texts of the period between 950 and 1200. The first one could be formulated thus: has there been any serious distortion in the picture of 'our own' universe/'our' Holy Land, or has it been manipulated only in certain details, but not in the core of the doctrine (the latter being understood as 'we' are (in) the 'center' (=the Holy Land), and 'the invaders' are (in) the 'periphery', according to the typical mental 'models' of pre-modern communities). Such a question would be indeed reasonable, since a typical feature of many of the medieval Christian communities was the so-called spatial segregation of the *Others* (Jews, Muslims, heretics, etc.). This is why all 'unclean peoples'—in accordance with the cliché of Gog and Magog—were traditionally marginalized and therefore situated along the borders, outside of the civilizational space. This is actually a spatial segregation also in the meaning of rejection, developed according to the model for the spatial exclusion of the *Other*.

The original sources clearly show that there have been numerous manipulations of the texts with regard to the habitats of these 'unclean' invaders, as well as regarding the direction of their invasions into the Holy Land. Until now, and this can be claimed with certainty, such manipulations of the paradigmatic model have been found in Byzantine and Rus'ian sources dating back to the

269 See the whole passage in Smith 2003, 95–96.

11th–12th centuries. One could say that what we have here is a certain fluidity in some of the perceptions of the main *topoi*, which have been discussed repeatedly above, as well as in the specific names of the ‘unclean peoples of Gog and Magog’. Following the naming model of the latter (as ‘Scythians’, ‘Huns’, ‘Ishmaelites’, etc.), after the mid-10th century and depending on the historical contexts, their role has been attributed to various tribes and peoples, including the Hungarians, Turks, Pechenegs, Normans, Cumans, etc. In general, however, they were all considered to be the ‘Other’ *par excellence* by the members of the civilized world, also as a consequence of their living on the borders of the same civilized world.

All the *cases* examined above outline a picture that is not marked by *signs* offering some coherent ‘structure’ of the perceptions about the ‘invaders’ and their presentation. Rather, these *case studies* and regions of medieval Europe that differed both ethnically and linguistically, as well as in religion—all these *signs* were, in fact, too vague, being dependent both on the existing stereotypes and clichés and on the realities of the given historical moment (i.e. the historical context). This is why the emblematic direction of *Evil*, the North, was sometimes replaced by another direction, often the East, but also the West and the South. Thus, ‘topographically’ speaking, the *location* of the ‘unclean peoples’ Gog and Magog was not restrictively linked to the paradigmatic north alone. It is then quite clear that there was no unification with regard to the *location* of the *Evil Forces*, called ‘unclean peoples’. This shall also become apparent from the analysis of the Bulgarian *case* in the following chapter.

The image of Alexander the Great, together with the perception of the civilizational space that extended south of the Caucasus mountain range, and the idea of ‘Gog and Magog’, destined to punish the sinful Christian peoples before the *End of Times*, were, in fact, important matrices during the Middle Ages. All of them were used by the various elites or by the learned men of the particular state to create appropriate doctrines and ideologemae, related (mostly, but not exclusively) to the notions of the *Other* and the correlated perceptions of the real or imaginary boundaries.

All the above-mentioned examples (which probably can also be expanded with others) illustrate the creation of a new, ‘legendary’ sacral topography in the Christian lands that *imitated* the paradigms of the Promised Land and the *chosen people* of the Old Testament. Naturally, every single *time* and *place*, as well as each individual (imperial/royal) *nation*, saw the fulfillment of this new ‘reading’ of the God-given predetermination differently. The fact, however, remains that for all of them the creation and upholding of this vision of ‘chosenness’ was an inherent ‘duty’, which was naturally mostly the result of the efforts of the local elites that reworked various archetypal literary storylines and/or

data from the so-called oral memory. It enabled the respective 'chosen' people to be involved in world history, seen as the history of salvation, as well as the sense of *endurance* in both time and space of the relevant political-religious (and sometimes dynastic) 'project' for *choseness*.

The viewpoint of Anthony D. Smith²⁷⁰ about the two types of 'chosen people', those that have entered into a covenant with God like the Jews, and those which he calls "missionary peoples", does not seem heuristic in this specific case, in my opinion. According to Smith, the former had traits such as "separation and exclusion," while the latter were characterized by "expansion and inclusion". However, the specific situations involving the Franks and especially the Byzantines point towards traits and tendencies that do not allow for the distinction of such 'pure' types. This is particularly true in the case of the Byzantines. During the larger part of their long-lasting history (with exceptions mostly found during the times of Justinian the Great, as well as during the second part of the 9th century, with the examples of the Great Moravians, the Bulgarians, and the Rus' during the rule of the basileus Michael III; and also during the 10th century, with the example of the Alans and the Rus'.²⁷¹), the Byzantines do not appear to be a typical 'expansionist people with a mission', but rather an 'inward-oriented' one, striving to preserve the purity of Christianity within the *Oecumene*. The Bulgarians viewed themselves in a similar way during the 13th and 14th centuries, describing themselves in various historical apocalyptic works namely as a people that "carried the true faith" on Judgment Day. Neither the Byzantines nor the Bulgarians had persistently attempted to transform, either by force, by persuasion, or as a combination of both,²⁷² any of the nearby or far-off pagan peoples, although the Bulgarians did *de facto* achieve this through the 'export' of the Word in Old Church Slavonic (Old Bulgarian) among the Serbs, the Rus' and other Eastern-Slavic peoples after the end of the 9th century. However, if we look at the Frankish *case*, where the Saxons were Christianized 'with fire and sword' by Charlemagne, we will have to admit that the latter acted on his own behalf and on the behalf of the Franks as a 'missionary' and as a 'missionary people', respectively. These last elaborations seem important to me, inasmuch that they can prevent us from falling under the dictate of generalized models and typifications, or under the pressure of isolated and taken out of context historical facts.

270 Smith 2003, 95–96.

271 For further details, see Ivanov 2003.

272 On this concept, see Smith 2003, 95.

The analysis presented heretofore implies the maintenance of a difficult balance between various ethno-cultural entities and some of their perceptions. I remain in the hope that what has been accomplished in this chapter as regards the exploration of certain characteristics of the 'mental' map of medieval Europe—in view of the concepts and notions of the 'Holy Land' and the locations-and-directions of the attack of the so-called invading 'unclean peoples' against the world of civilization before Judgment Day—will contribute for the better understanding of the above concepts, as well as of the 'mental' map itself, which encompasses not only Christianity but also Judaism and Islam.

Bulgarian Dimensions of the Anticipation of the *End of Times*: Texts. Contexts. Real Places and Symbolic *Topoi*

3.1 Danube Bulgaria: ‘Texts’ of *Word and Image*

From the outset, I would like to state that the emphasis here shall not fall on the analysis of the revolutionary ‘eventfulness’ in Bulgaria (in the years 1040–1041, 1072–1073, 1185–1186, to point the most often interpreted uprisings after 1018 and prior to the restoration of the Bulgarian Tsardom in 1185/1186). Instead, the present chapter will focus on the apocalyptic texts and some evidence from fresco paintings—scenes and the faces of specific Old Testament prophets, found in Bulgarian churches and dating from the time period specified in the title. The latter could be viewed with regard to their indirect relation to the apocalyptic expectations, since a large number of them are located in monastic churches. The historical apocalyptic texts themselves are also (most probably) the work of monks.

Furthermore, this last chapter of the study is mostly based on the analysis of some important names and *topoi* in historical apocalyptic texts originating in the Bulgarian lands, and for this reason I shall try to present in a concise manner some of the essential aspects of the apocryphal genre and historical apocalypticism in particular that were visible in the chronological interval between the 10th and the 12th centuries. Secondly, as has already been said, I shall also make a brief analysis of the pictorial evidence on the walls of a number of preserved churches from the ethnic Bulgarian territories dating from the period between the late 10th and the late 12th century. Their fresco programs can indirectly, i.e. by containing scenes and compositions generally related to eschatology, the Apocalypse and the Salvation of Men, reveal references, at least in theory, to such a subject matter.

Historical apocalyptic works are the part of medieval literary production that is directly and/or indirectly related to such thematic areas as *political ideology*, *memory*, *imaginativeness*, and so on. According to Anisava Miltenova, they are indeed a “unique phenomenon in medieval Bulgaria, which in its productivity has no analogue in other Slavic literatures”.¹ I assume that this correct

¹ Miltenova 2006, 848.

statement could also be interpreted through the prosaic fact that it was the Bulgarians who were the first among the Slavic-speaking Eastern-Orthodox peoples to legitimately acquire the title of ‘tsar’ (equivalent to ‘basileus/emperor’) in the first half of the 10th century; on this basis they proceeded to develop their self-perception as ‘God’s chosen people’ with a God-protected capital (Preslav). This naturally led to the rapid emergence of (historical) apocalyptic works, which scholars have identified with the genre of prophetic *revelations* (*apocalypsis*) and *visions* (*visio*) or with their interpretations.²

In the words of Nikolai Shivarov,³ eschatological sentiments in Bulgaria were likely to have occurred as early as the beginning of the 10th century, especially with regard to the consequences of the persecutions made by Prince Vladimir-Rasate (889–893). Moreover, the commentary of St. Hippolytus of Rome was translated quite early into Old Bulgarian/Old Church Slavonic (*Iziasnenie na sv. Ipolit Rimski za Antikhrista*), although it did express the hope that these persecutions and violence were not, in fact, the expected *End*.⁴ The text was initially written in the Glagolitic alphabet.⁵ These interpretations in Old Bulgarian, along with the original text by St. Hippolytus of Rome, have survived in a transcript dating from the 13th century (*Chud. 12*), which is the oldest one to date and is housed in the State Historical Museum of Russia, in Moscow.⁶ In the second half of the same century, perhaps in response to the epidemics, hunger, and wars of that time, another work of the same author was translated, with the indubitable title “Antichrist” (*De Antichristo*), which revealed the final apocalyptic end. It has reached us in a manuscript from the end of the 12th century, widely known as the *Sermon of Hippolytus of Rome on Antichrist*. It contains an acute eschatology and a feverish anticipation of the *End*, which resembles the state, described in *2 Thessalonians* of St. Paul the Apostle.⁷

It can be said with certainty that the emergence of an enhanced visionary and prophetic tradition in Byzantium towards the middle and second half of the 10th century has also given impetus to the Bulgarian anticipation of the *End*. A number of scholars have addressed this side of the life of the Byzantine society, as has already been mentioned several times, but it is particularly important to underline that the observations do not only belong to the Byzantines

2 Miltenova 2006, 848.

3 Shivarov 2013, 131.

4 Shivarov 2002, 296; Shivarov 2013, 131; see also Miltenova 2006, 851 and n. 15.

5 See Slavova 1999, 35–46.

6 Ilieva 2006, 41.

7 Shivarov 2002, 296–298 and n. 29, 30 and 31; Shivarov 2013, 131; see also Miltenova 2006, 851 and n. 15.

themselves, but also to foreigners, namely highly educated representatives of the West. Among them is the aforementioned bishop of Cremona, Liutprand (c. 920–970), who left a description of a number of facts witnessed by him during his stay in Constantinople in the 960s and reflected in his work, *Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana* (Ch. 39–41). The bishop describes a state of increased interest in the Byzantine capital towards prophecies under the name of Daniel and the so-called *Sibylline Books*, and also other texts, which means that the notions of the impending *End* of the visible world were popular also in Byzantium during the second half of the 10th century.⁸

The interest in the issues of eschatology and the apocalyptic expectations in Christian Bulgaria is indirectly illustrated by the two Bulgarian translations of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara's *Apocalypse*—the first one most likely completed during the reign of Simeon (893–927), and the second one⁹ during the rule of his son, Petur (927–969; † 970)—as well as *Vision of Daniel*. The earliest translation (analogous to the earliest redaction in Greek) is dated to the first decades of the 10th century, but it has survived to this day thanks to a transcript in Serbian dated to the late 13th–early 14th century, from the Hilandar Monastery (in MS 382 (453)). It has retained traces of the Old Bulgarian original, reflecting a number of features of the Preslav Literary School.¹⁰

The first translation of *Vision of Daniel*, the earliest transcript of which is again available in MS 382 in the Hilandar Monastery, is located, hardly by accident, next to the aforementioned *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. It has been widely accepted following the research of the late Paul Alexander that this *Vision* has as its source a text in Greek that was written c. 827–828 on the island of Sicily, in direct connection to the Arab invasions in these hitherto Byzantine territories. The latter is also apparent from the available Sicilian toponymy, which was also preserved in the Old Bulgarian/Old Church Slavonic text.¹¹

As an additional argument in favor of such a dating of the translations comes a short text, accompanying these works and written under the name of Hippolytus of Rome. In it, it is explicitly stated that the first signs of the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment were expected to occur in the years surrounding 992, i.e. before “the seventh millennium is half-way through”.

8 Brandes 2000, 435–436; Miltenova 2006, 850–851.

9 See Iovcheva and Taseva 1994, 44–51; Iovcheva and Taseva 1995, 22–45; Penkova 1977, 102–113; Nikolov 1997, 91–107; Miltenova 2006, 853–855; Istorija na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura 2008, 263; cf. Thomson 1985, 143–173—in his opinion, the second translation dates from the 11th century.

10 Iovcheva and Taseva 1994, 44–51; Iovcheva and Taseva 1995, 22–45.

11 Alexander 1978b, 5–35.

Such seven-thousand-year calculations, as has already been discussed in chapters 1 and 2, were also translated in earlier texts written in the Glagolitic alphabet.¹² In the second half of the 10th century, they became relevant once again, before sparking renewed interest during the following 11th century, in view of the anticipated *End* in 1092.¹³

Other Old Bulgarian translations of the so-called fundamental apocalyptic texts were also completed in the 10th century. Later, they became the basis of various historical apocalyptic compilations, especially after the mid-11th century. One of the most significant written documents of the 10th century is, for instance, the *Apocryphal Apocalypse* of St. John the Evangelist, which was most probably translated during this very century.¹⁴ A number of *topoi* and motifs from the *Apocryphal Apocalypse* would subsequently make their way into later apocalyptic works, in particular *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* (11th century), which contains numerous borrowings from the *Apocryphal Apocalypse*.¹⁵

In Bulgaria in the 10th century, probably in line with the expected *End of the world* around 992, a heightened interest could be seen towards the interpretations of the *Apocalypse*, as well as towards prognostic works and historical apocalypticism. This is also the period when the translation of the interpretative edition of the *Apocalypse* was dated, together with the well-known commentary of Andreas of Caesarea. The Slavic translation of this text has yet to receive an adequate and thorough study; there is also no unified opinion regarding its origins, although most scholars date it to the 10th century, with some even specifying a chronology: the text is thought to have emerged in 927 in a South Slavic milieu, probably with a Glagolitic prototype.¹⁶ Angel Nikolov rightly notes that in this monument, world history is framed by the existence and subsequent fall of seven kingdoms (“Nin (Senir, Nil, Senil) among the Assyrians, Avarakh (*sic*) among the Medes, Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, Cyrus among the Persians, Alexander among the Greeks, Romilus (Rominus) among the Romans, Constantine in Constantinople”).¹⁷ It should also be noted that the above-mentioned passage shows a striking similarity to another passage from an 11th-century historical apocalyptic work, *Interpretation of Daniel* (*Tulkuvanie Daniilovo*), which also mentions the kings Senil, Avarakh

12 See Turilov 1988, 27–38.

13 Miltenova 2006, 854; *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura* 2008, 263; Shivarov 2002, 295–296.

14 Taseva and Iovcheva 1996, 281–293; Miltenova 2006, 851.

15 For further details, see Miltenov 2004, 85–102; Miltenova 2006, 851; for the full text in English, see Petkov 2008, 207–212.

16 For further details, see Nikolov 2006, 206–209; Miltenova 2006, 852 and n. 20 and 21.

17 Nikolov 2006, 208–209.

(*sic*), Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Romulus (*sic*) and Constantine. Immediately thereafter, however, the unknown Bulgarian author of the compilation *Interpretation of Daniel* has added the following passage: "And when the beginning of all evil on earth comes, Mikhail khagan shall rise among the Bulgarians". This way, he 'completes' the idea of Andreas of Caesarea about the world kingdoms, by adding at the end of the list, just before the absolute *End of Times*, the kingdom of the Bulgarians.¹⁸

The same 10th century saw the emergence of other translated works as well, which further reinforces the idea that the educated Bulgarians were indeed interested in (historical) apocalypticism and eschatology. Some of these works were actually from the field of hagiographic and exegetic literature. There is still no absolute clarity as to the time and place of the translation of St. Andrew the Fool's *Vita*, with the discussions regarding the translation's origins gravitating towards an Old Bulgarian or Old Russian original. According to Lennart Rydén,¹⁹ it is the work of the priest from Hagia Sophia, Nikephoros, and was written sometime around the mid-10th century. The *Vita* is also of significance for our topic, since, along with the various episodes in it that conform to different genre characteristics, there are also some prophetic revelations about the *Last Times*. The translational features of this text indicate traits characteristic of the so-called 'late' Preslav Literary School. Despite the presence of a number of Russicisms in it, the *Vita's* content fits into the general tendencies seen during the reign of Tsar Petur in Bulgaria, both with the ascetic theme of Andrew the Fool's abnegation, and with that of the spiritual ascension and growth. And also—which is particularly important for us—with the apocalyptic visions of the *End of the world*, which were highly typical of the decades before 992 in both Byzantium and early-medieval Bulgaria.²⁰

Another text from the same genre is the *Vita* of St. Basil the Younger, although it is not completely clear whether its translation was completed in the 10th century, or later, in the 11th–12th centuries.²¹ And another text can also be added to the same group: *Homily of Ephrem the Syrian on the Second Coming*.²²

18 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 125 for the Old Bulgarian original, 135 for the Bulgarian translation; Miltenova 2006, 853; for the full text in English, see Petkov 2008, 203–206.

19 See Miltenova 2006, 851 and n. 16.

20 See *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura* 2008, 265, together with the literature cited there regarding the discussion about the Bulgarian or Russian protograph of the translation from Greek.

21 See the translation in modern Bulgarian in *Starobulgarska eskhatologija* 1993, 197–204; Miltenova 2006, 851–853.

22 See the translation in modern Bulgarian in *Starobulgarska eskhatologija* 1993, 142–143; see also Miltenova 2006, 852.

Anisava Miltenova assumes that the new translations with eschatological and apocalyptic traits in Bulgaria were carried out during the reign of Tsar Petur and were in tune with the tsar's personal interest in monastic issues, i.e. the themes of sin and redemption. She deems it quite likely that it was also during this time period that the translation of the monastic florigeia, found in the first half (f. 1–67) of the same MS 382 from the Hilandar Monastery that bore features of the Preslav Literary School, was carried out. It is particularly important to note that two fragments of prognostic nature were added among the excerpts from the reflections of the holy Fathers of the Church. The first one is attributed to St. Hypatius of Ephesus (f. 35b—on when the *End would come*), and the second one is again thought to have an emblematic author, namely St. Hippolytus of Rome (f. 36a—on commentaries of the Prophet Daniel). These two texts directly point to the calculations regarding the onset of the *Last Times* on earth, as well as the Last Judgment and Second Coming, i.e. they refer directly to the contents of the St. John's *Revelation*. They associate this *End* with the year 6500 from the Incarnation, i.e. to the year 1000 (or 992, respectively, according to the Byzantine tradition). These two fragments can also be found in a similar text in Greek and are associated with the apocalyptic tradition of the 10th century, but in Miltenova's opinion, the Old Bulgarian translation had a different source, in which the text was divided into two parts, with the names of St. Hypatius of Ephesus and St. Hippolytus of Rome, respectively.²³

In the second half of the 10th century, the Bulgarian priest Jeremiah wrote the apocryphal work *Tale of the Tree of the Cross* (*Povest za Krustnoto durvo*).²⁴ It is widely believed to have been written either at the very end of Tsar Petur's rule, or shortly after his death.²⁵ The idea and notion of the True Cross in Jerusalem is too important not to have been emphasized by the Old Bulgarian author, Priest Jeremiah, especially following the 960s. Moreover, the Bulgarian presbyter linked it to the rod of Moses and the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem by King David, deftly compiling also other significant stories from the Old and New Testament, all in connection with the Tree of the Cross.²⁶ Both the *Revelation* and the *Tale of the Tree of the Cross* contain a number of 'key' images and symbols and their related prophecies regarding the fate of the nations that refer to the day of the Second Coming of Christ. The theme

23 For further details, see Miltenova 2006, 855 and n. 31 and 32, 856; especially on how the translations of St. Hippolytus of Rome in the 10th century should not be overestimated, see Shivarov 2002, 301; *contra*—Miltenova 2011, 202; see also Shivarov 2004, 569, 571, 574.

24 Polyviannyi 2000, 88–89, 119.

25 Polyviannyi 2000, 88.

26 Polyviannyi 2000, 88–89.

of the True Cross in particular, 'bound', in addition, to the rule of Tsar Petur, is also present in several emblematic texts from the Old Bulgarian historical apocalypticism, including the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* (*Bulgarski apokrifni letopis*, from the Isaiah cycle of prophecies), which appeared either in the last quarter of the 11th century, or at the very beginning of the 12th century, as recently proposed by Anisava Miltenova.²⁷ Of course, a number of other sources from the Bulgarian Tsardom dating from the early 10th century can also be added here (*cf.* Climent of Okhrid and St. Naum et al.), all of them dealing—directly or indirectly—with mankind's apocalyptic expectations and those among the Bulgarian *literati* in particular.²⁸

The reign of Tsar Simeon and, later, Tsar Petur created favorable conditions for a true 'interweaving' of the Bulgarians into the canvas of the world (and Christian) history. The latter implies, no less, an inclusion of the Bulgarian Tsardom among the successive 'chosen kingdoms' before the end of this world, and of the Bulgarians, as a 'chosen people', in the fabric of the history of the (future) salvation of mankind. According to Dimitur Peev, the ideological paradigms of these two Bulgarian monarchs are easy to recognize: the paradigm of Simeon reflected the process of "seeking of an identity within the Christian understanding of history under conditions of extreme antagonism with Byzantium", while that of his son, Tsar Petur, affirmed "an identity molded after an imperial model with the idea that the identified nation is part of God's people within the Christian universe".²⁹ This true observation indirectly substantiates the inevitable interest of the Bulgarians, as a 'chosen people' with a 'chosen kingdom', towards texts and 'signs' linked to subject matter surrounding the *End of the world* by 992 and the role of the Bulgarians in God's plan.

Another indication to the years of Tsar Petur's rule (927–969) is the macro-textual analysis of the entire contents of the well-known Manuscript 382 from the Hilandar Monastery, which contains (in its first half, f. 1–92) excerpts from various anonymous writers and Fathers of the Church. The linguistic characteristics of these excerpts tie the dating to the so-called 'late' Preslav Literary School. This is yet another indirect confirmation of existing interest in the *Last Times* between the mid-10th century and 992.³⁰ Anisava Miltenova is inclined to accept that compilations of a similar nature (with eschatological messages and interpretations) were created in the monasteries of Preslav and those in its surroundings. In the early decades of the 11th century, they appeared in

27 Miltenova 2006, 859; for the full text in English, see Petkov 2008, 194–199.

28 For further details, see Shivarov 2004, 567–569.

29 Peev 2008, 123.

30 Miltenova 2011, 202–203.

the western parts of present day Bulgaria; after the uprising of Peter Delian they were updated and edited, including the addition of new glosses, mainly toponyms from the area between Sredets and Thessaloniki,³¹ as will be seen from the following paragraphs of this study. This type of works is distinguished by such, distinct specifics: the numerous new interpolations of toponyms, a completely new phenomenon,³² as seen against the backdrop of the preceding evolution of the apocryphal literature.

Just recently, Todor Mollov³³ made a connection between the solar calendar in the Old Bulgarian translation of the *Book of Enoch* (*2 Enoch*), attributed to Priest Jeremiah, the Bulgarian patriarch at the time (serving God and the Bulgarians precisely at the end of the 10th century, i.e. around the year 992, significant in view of the *End of the world*) and the doxological formula *Trisagion*. It has been found both in a transcript of the *Tale of the Tree of the Cross* by said Priest Jeremiah,³⁴ and in the Epilogue to a compilation by Patriarch German, where the latter is presented as “a servant of the *Trisagion*”. Todor Mollov associates all of them with “worldview pressure”, a concept introduced by him and relevant in times of crisis, when shattering events tend to occur and are often interpreted through the prism of the expected *End of the world*. Such ‘pressure’ could undoubtedly be observed in the Bulgarian lands during the last few decades of the 10th century, when the Bulgarians fought with the Byzantines almost constantly; this ‘pressure’ would also without a doubt have affected the overall existence of the Bulgarians. The pressure, along with the ensuing changes to the ‘worldview’ within the Bulgarian borders, has been logically associated by Todor Mollov with the 20-year period from the fall of Preslav (971) into the hands of the Byzantines, led by the basileus John Tzimiskes (969–976), to the expected *End of the world* in 992. Of course, the essential clarification must be made here that the northeastern Bulgarian lands had been liberated by Tsar Samuil’s army already in 976 and only after the significant for our study year 992, and more specifically in 1001, did they fall again—and permanently—into Byzantine hands. Whether these associations made by Todor Mollov will be accepted as valid by other historians remains to be seen. Indeed, they do sound logical, since they combine in a single plane the important themes of the “lost capital of the tsardom” (Preslav), the captured at that point Bulgarian tsar Boris II (who, in addition, died rather incongruously, probably in 976, after being set free by the Byzantines, together with his brother Roman, to return to

31 Miltenova 2011, 203.

32 Miltenova 2011, 203–205.

33 Mollov 2012, 7–22.

34 See Ivanova 2008, 211–212, esp. 212.

Bulgaria—*cf.* the motif of the death of the Last King), and the notion of the *End of the world* in 992. If we were to see in Tsar Boris II an allusion to his predecessor and great-grandfather Boris, who Christianized the Bulgarians and took the name of his baptizer, the basileus Michael III, in 864, whose Christian name (Michael) was very popular in the historical apocalyptic texts from the 11th century onwards and was associated with both St. Michael the Archangel and the Last Emperor/Tsar, called Michael in some apocalyptic versions, then the context surrounding the year 992 would become even clearer to us. Namely: the 'fall of the kingdom' motif is associated by definition with the expected *End of the world* (992), and in an Eastern Orthodox context, also with the name *Michael* (the *topos* of the Last Tsar, along with St. Michael the Archangel, slaying the forces of Antichrist before the Last Judgment). For now, however, this shall remain simply a potentially productive direction of thought, the legitimacy of which will await its further development and possible confirmation in the sources.

During the 11th–12th centuries, Bulgarian writers, and especially the devotees of apocryphal literature among them, being by now a part of not only the Byzantine state, but also of the overall course of development of the Eastern Orthodox imperial literature with its imagery and ideology,³⁵ continued to take a keen interest in themes concerning visions (revelations, ascensions: *Vision of Isaiah* (*Videnie Isaevo*), *Revelation of Baruch* (*Otkrovenie Varukhovo*), *St. John's Revelation*, *Journey of Our Father Agapius to Paradise* (*Khozhdenie na sv. Agapii do Raia*), etc.), and also in the well-known accounts about the Tree of the Cross, by Gregory the Theologian, in a transcript from a Greek translation. A large number of these apocryphal texts were known to the Bulgarians also in the 10th century, while others came much later, during the years of Byzantine rule.³⁶

The above-mentioned apocryphal works (as well as whole apocryphal cycles) were spread throughout various mixed compilations (mixed-content collections) that differed in contents and had no consistent principle of compiling or specific connections to the feasts of the church calendar.³⁷ It is believed that they are all the work of the lower clergy, priests, deacons, as well as grammaticists who mostly resided in the Sredets (modern Sofia) and Velbuzhd (modern Kiustendil) dioceses of the Okhrid Archbishopric.³⁸ This is

35 On the influence of Byzantium and the changes that occurred in the Bulgarian lands after 1018, see Kaimakamova 2011, 169–174; on the Bulgarian literature after 1018 and until 1185, see also Miltenova 2011, 199–212.

36 See Petkanova 2001, 292–299.

37 *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura* 2008, 415.

38 Georgiev 1966, 80–81; Kaimakamova 2011, 174–176.

of particular importance for our study, especially in view of such topics from the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism as the topography of the last battle against the Ishmaelites and the names of cities and places in the original Byzantine (and Latin?) texts which were later changed by Bulgarian writers in the 11th–12th centuries. These specifics will be further discussed in other parts of this chapter.

During the period between the late 9th century and the early 14th century, Bulgarian literature did not produce any original works such as the universal chronicles that were a product of exclusively Bulgarian ‘making’, which is a well-established fact.³⁹ This shortage, which has its logical explanation in view of the Bulgarians’ wish to be included in world history as a ‘chosen people’, and even more so in their role as the western segment of the Christian Byzantine tsardom/empire,⁴⁰ can be compensated, to a certain degree, with an analysis of the existing historical apocalyptic works that became one of the main sub-genres in Bulgarian literature during the years of Byzantine rule.

According to Anisava Miltenova, “the second half of the 11th century saw the emergence of a **new phenomenon** (*sic* in the original text—*Author’s note*) in literature that was related to the uprisings against the Byzantine rule: it was the cycle of historical apocalyptic writings that appeared immediately after the revolt of Petur Delian (1040–1041) and before the end of the 11th century ...”.⁴¹ In essence, these works are compilative translations, but they also contain a number of original elements that reveal the views of the unknown scribes (most probably stemming from the lower clergy, as has already been mentioned) from the 11th–12th centuries regarding the Bulgarian ‘chosenness’, the specific unification-and-distinction from the Byzantines, as well as the expectations for the *End of the world*, the role of the Last King in it, etc.⁴² These writings in particular do not have a counterpart in the other Slavic-speaking Eastern Orthodox medieval cultures during said period,⁴³ which makes them especially valuable in view of the various, differing in essence, reconstructions.⁴⁴ Their explosive emergence was namely during the second half of the 11th century (but not earlier than the uprising of Petur Delian, since this type of

39 See, for instance, Bozhilov 1995, 217–263, esp. 252–254, 256–258; especially on the features of the universal chronicles, and in particular on those translated by order of Tsar Simeon, see Kaimakamova 2011, 117–156.

40 See Polyvianni 2000; Stepanov S.a., 122–129; Stepanov 2005, 182–199; Stepanov 2007b, 108–118.

41 Miltenova 2011, 201 ff.

42 *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura* 2008, 419.

43 Floria, Turilov, Ivanov 2004, 141.

44 For further details, see Kaimakamova 1990, 124–151; Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996.

prophetic texts were generally compiled after the events had already occurred). It was this relatively early period of the Byzantine domination over the Bulgarians that most of the texts of the so-called first cycle of historical apocalyptic works in medieval Bulgaria are dated to (the last writings are usually dated to the late 11th and early 12th century).⁴⁵ They include *Vision of Daniel*, *Interpretation of Daniel*, *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* (in essence, a prophecy under the name of Isaiah), the concise version of the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara.⁴⁶

Unlike other apocrypha of an eschatological nature, historical apocalyptic works cannot be attributed—either in composition or in stylistics, much less in form and content—to the 'visions' type, which represents travels to the afterlife, for instance, to the heavens or to Paradise (examples include the Slavic translations of *Book of Enoch*, *Revelation of Baruch*, *Vision of Isaiah* and *Ascension of Isaiah*, etc.). Their purpose was not to outline how the world was created, or the workings of the invisible world and the way of life of its inhabitants, but to represent the destinies of men and the 'chosen peoples' before the *End of Times*. At the same time, they should not be perceived as 'true' apocalyptic works like the paradigmatic *Book of Revelation* of St. John the Theologian, since they clearly contain two compositional parts: the first one is a chronicle, while the second one is apocalyptic; the two, however, are inextricably tied to one another.⁴⁷

In general, this kind of writings present the history of the 'world kingdoms' (usually four in number), along with a description of a number of their rulers, sometimes also emphasizing their possible connection to the Bulgarian lands, before reaching the so-called *Last Times* before the Last Judgment. The second part most often includes the legend of the Last Emperor, popular in the Eastern Orthodox environment (in some texts he bears the name Michael), the tradition of which can be seen quite early on in Byzantium (at least from the early 8th century, shortly after the creation of Methodius of Pathara's *Apocalypse*, which has been discussed numerous times throughout this book), as well as the short-lived rule of Antichrist before Judgment Day. It was in this part that the unknown Bulgarian scribes made various additions (interpolations), although certain interpolations can also be found in the chronicle part. These insertions contained various messages and expectations, related both to the Bulgarian history and to the future of the Bulgarians as 'chosen people'.⁴⁸

45 See in further detail Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996.

46 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 24–25.

47 Istoriiia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura 2008, 419–420.

48 Istoriiia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura 2008, 420.

In fact, the historical apocalyptic works of the period in question contain a large number of elements of the Bulgarian political ideology and doctrines, the origins of which are visible in the official literature of the times of Tsar Simeon and Tsar Petur.⁴⁹ It can be argued with conviction that their explosive emergence after 1041 was also the result of the anticipated *End of Times*, set to come around 1092.⁵⁰

Since this type of works is among the main building blocks for parts of the analysis and some of the conclusions in this book, especially in the part regarding the Bulgarian dimensions of the anticipation of the *End of Times*, it is necessary to address, at least briefly, some of the essential characteristics and specifics of these prophetic visions associated with the names of two of the most important Old Testament prophets, Isaiah and Daniel.⁵¹ They penetrated into the Bulgarian medieval literature through their Byzantine (apocryphal) prototypes, based on the canonical books of Daniel and Isaiah and 'translated' in the language (and reflecting the already Christian notions) of the Byzantines regarding the *End of the world*. There can be no doubt that a central perception in them is that of the anticipated arrival of the Messiah (and the establishment of His messianic kingdom), who was expected to hold an eschatological victory in the *Last Times*; it was only then that the time of God's Kingdom would come—a theme that has been further developed in the *Book of Daniel*.⁵² Already in early Christianity, this messianic idea overlapped with the so-called chiliasm, i.e. with the concept of the millennial kingdom, based, among other things, on important passages from St. John's *Revelation* (Rev. 20). It would subsequently undergo some revisions and modifications, serving as the basis for the emergence of a number of texts of the political prophecy type, both in Western (Latin-speaking) Europe and in early medieval Byzantium. Generally, such prophecies appeared in times of internal turmoil or invasions of the Empire from the outside, especially by nomadic tribes, and, after the 630s, also by Muslims.⁵³

49 For such an approach, see, for instance, Stepanov 2007, 197–204, as well as Vachkova 2005.

50 Mollov 1997.

51 As was already mentioned, a vast amount of literature on this topic has existed since the 19th century, including Vasilii Istrin and Nikolai Tikhonravov, as well as later studies by Gerhard Podskalsky, Paul Alexander, Anastasios Lolos, Lennart Rydén, etc.; the specific texts of Bulgarian origins, based on said prophecies until the end of the 12th century can be found in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 109–206; for the English translations of some of these texts, see Petkov 2008, 194–212.

52 See in detail Podskalsky 1972, 16–39, 64–69, 99–100; Vulchanov 1975; Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 59–60; Di Tommaso 2005.

53 For further details, see Istrin 1897, 153–250; see also *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura* 2008, 420.

The text, known from the Greek indexes as *Pseudepigraph of Daniel*, is supposedly dated to the 7th–8th century, with several versions in Greek appearing a century later. In some of them, the interpretation of the *Book of Daniel* overlaps with fragments from the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. As has been pointed out above, the text called *Vision of Daniel* was written in Sicily around 827–828 and it contains a number of details concerning the Arab attacks on the island's Christians during the 8th century and the beginning of the 9th.⁵⁴ It is this version that has been translated by a Bulgarian. According to one viewpoint, he was part of the inner circle of Tsar Simeon and the translation itself was completed in the early decades of the 10th century.⁵⁵ According to another opinion, this happened in the time of his successor, Tsar Petur.⁵⁶ The historical apocalyptic Bulgarian version from the 11th century contains a number of specific interpolations of the names of cities and other toponyms from the territory of present-day Bulgaria, as well as the territories of Northern Macedonia and Greece. These interpolations—at least according to the unknown Bulgarian scribe—were emblematic in view of the outlining of the Bulgarian lands' 'center' and the confrontation between the 'chosen Bulgarian people' and various invaders before the *End of Times*. These revisions, under the titles of *Vision of Daniel* and *Interpretation of Daniel* (and known from their earliest transcript in the so-called Collection of Priest Vasilii Dragol from the third quarter of the 13th century, which is now preserved at the National Library of Serbia in Belgrade, under No. 651), provide additional information about the suppression of Petur Delian's uprising in 1041. The *Vision* in particular mentions the names of the two last tsars of the Bulgarians before the fall of their kingdom in 1018: Gavril Radomir (1014–1015) and Ioan Vladislav (1015–1018). In turn, the *Interpretation*, although markedly compilative, does provide plentiful information regarding the notions about and the names and titles given to the Last Tsar⁵⁷ in the Bulgarian lands, the conflict with the so-called 'blonde beards', etc.⁵⁸

The other important text of the same cycle of historical apocalyptic writings is *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. It is original in style and was created following the model of *Vision of Daniel*, *Vision of Isaiah*, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius

54 Alexander 1978b, 5–35; Istoriiia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura 2008, 420.

55 Ivanova 1979, 57–96.

56 Miltenova 2006, 854–855.

57 *Tsar* is the rendering of *Emperor* in Old Bulgarian/Old Church Slavonic—translator's note.

58 Istoriiia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura 2008, 421; Kaimakamova 2011, 162; the texts with commentaries can be seen in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 109–138, and the English translation—in Petkov 2008, 199–212.

of Pathara, and others.⁵⁹ It is preserved in a small number of transcripts, the oldest of which is Serbian and dates back to the 15th century (in a collection from Nikolits Monastery near Bialo Pole; filed under No. 52), while the Bulgarian one dates from the first half of the 17th century.⁶⁰ This text, too, contains a number of Bulgarian toponyms, including a specific tsar, Gagan Odolian (the distorted name-title of the real Petur Delian, as will become clear from the analysis in the present book), glorified in battles and other deeds. Gagan is also presented according to the mythological matrices.⁶¹ This work is significant also due to the fact that it contains some interesting details about the uprising, which are otherwise absent from the contemporary Byzantine histories and chronicles.⁶² Though the dating of the *Tale* is somewhat problematic, the most widely accepted time of its creation is thought to be around the 1070s, shortly after *Vision of Isaiah* and *Interpretation of Daniel*.⁶³

It is accepted that the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* (its full name being *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah of How an Angel Brought Him to the Seventh Heaven*) completes this first cycle of historical-apocalyptic works in Bulgaria, created during the Byzantine rule.⁶⁴ It has been preserved in a Serbian compilation from the early 17th century.⁶⁵ Miliiiana Kaimakamova describes it as “the most influential historical work of the Bulgarians”⁶⁶ from the years of Byzantine dominion, emphasizing the fact that the anonymous Bulgarian author of the text deliberately presented his fellow countrymen as “direct recipients of the ‘Roman’ and ‘Hellenic’ heritage”.⁶⁷

Dmitrii Polyviannyi also focuses on one of the most important aspects of the ‘coordinate system’ of medieval Christian Bulgarians in the field of culture and ideology. According to him, “the comparison to Byzantium occupied a central place” in this system, with the educated Bulgarians believing that a

59 For a detailed commentary, see Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 109–240; see also Biliarsky 2011; Biliarsky 2013.

60 For further details, see Miltenova and Kaimakamova 1983, 52–73; Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 139–160; Kaimakamova 2011, 162 ff.; for the text in English, see Petkov 2008, 207–212.

61 See Iordanov 1994, 195–207; Iordanov 1995, 31–52; Mollov 1997.

62 *Istoriia na bulgarskata srednovekovna literatura* 2008, 422.

63 Kaimakamova 1990, 27, 48–49; see also Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 139–160.

64 For the text itself and a commentary, see Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 192–206; for the English translation of the same text, see Petkov 2008, 194–199; for the concept of the Bulgarian Tsardom in this chronicle in particular, see Kaimakamova 2011, 183–216; Biliarsky 2011; Biliarsky 2013.

65 Turilov 1995, 1–39.

66 Kaimakamova 2011, 171.

67 Kaimakamova 2011, 171.

symbiosis existed between them and the Byzantines; the literal expression is “symmetrical Bulgarian-Greek symbiosis”.⁶⁸

The explicit combining in a single whole (both real and imaginary) of the ‘Bulgarian land’ and the ‘Greek land’,⁶⁹ the rotation of Byzantine basilei and Bulgarian tsars on the imperial throne, etc. is, however, something new that differs in some of its aspects from the typical characteristics of the Bulgarian power doctrine and political ideology from the time of the tsars Simeon and Petur. These actual changes in the political field after 1018 undoubtedly affected the unknown Bulgarian authors of such apocalyptic works. The latter clearly sought reconciliation between the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, presenting their relations and positions as equal within the borders of the unified, after 1018, Empire of the Orthodox East. This novelty is impressive against the overall atmosphere, permeating the lines and interlinear spaces of the texts. In the words of Miliiana Kaimakamova, this trait of the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic works from the second half of the 11th century is “the new tendency in the ideological rationalization”⁷⁰ of the political and social changes that occurred after 1018.

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On the following pages I shall address some of the scenes and prophet images from the Old Testament, depicted in churches across the Bulgarian ethnic territories, which—albeit only indirectly—could be associated with the interest in the apocalyptic expectations that existed in the ecclesiastical and monastic milieu during the period specified in the title.⁷¹ The reason for this choice is easily explained. As has already been mentioned, the Orthodox world of the East, evolving under the heavy influence of Byzantium, did not view St. John’s *Book of Revelation* as a liturgical work, in contrast to Western Europe. For this reason, although it was recognized as one of the canonical books of the New Testament (at the Council of Carthage in the beginning of the 5th

68 Polyviannyi 1996, 102.

69 Stepanov S.a., 122–129; Stepanov 2007b, 108–118.

70 Kaimakamova 2011, 171.

71 In church paintings—and in view of the topic at hand—the issue of the archangelic cycle (especially in its relation to the names of the archangels Michael and Gabriel) is of equal importance, but it will be discussed in the second volume of the present study. It will be devoted to various aspects of the cult of St. Michael the Archangel in a European context, with regard to the anticipated *End of the world* and the time period mentioned in the title. See a general overview of this cycle in Byzantine art in Gabelić 1991; Gabelić 2004; Peers 1997, 113–131.

century), and although after the 6th century this book did not raise any objections in Byzantium, it remained for a long time beyond the interest of the most prominent Greek-speaking (Byzantine) theologians. It obviously took several centuries after the 4th century for the *Book of Revelation* to gain the theological approval of the East and the Byzantines in particular. As the late John Meyendorff wrote, it was “accepted into the canon [of the New Testament] only with reluctance”.⁷² For instance, it was omitted from the canon in the lists of the Council of Laodicea (canon 60), in Apostolic Canon 85, and by St. Cyril of Jerusalem. The commentators from the School of Antioch also did not respond positively to this book, but through the strong influence of the School of Alexandria (and in particular of St. Athanasius of Alexandria and especially his disciple, St. John of Damascus in the 8th century), it was finally endorsed by the Byzantine Church.⁷³ This, of course, does not mean that the theme of the Apocalypse was wholly absent from the Byzantine pictorial tradition; it was just not developed as an iconographic scheme, i.e. in specific details that the artists could more or less strictly abide by.⁷⁴ In this situation, I think it would be only logical to review some Old Testament scenes from churches in the lands of the medieval Bulgarians before the end of the 12th century, since it was the Old Testament prophets who were the first to preach the idea of the coming Messiah and the *End of the world*.

And so, the oldest depictions of Old Testament stories can be found in the town of Kostur (present-day Kastoria in Greece), which was within the borders of the Bulgarian Tsardom from the late 9th century and until the early 11th century. They are in the Church of the Holy Archangels, in the first fresco layer from the beginning of the 10th century, which some believe to have been painted by Greek-speaking artists. In the narthex, on the western wall, are depicted the three Old Testament patriarchs (forefathers) of the Jews: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was with them that God made the Covenant, including the order-and-promise for their offspring to multiply, and for it to inhabit the Promised Land. These three figures have been depicted together from as early as the 5th century, in cave-cells and chapels in Bawit, Coptic Egypt, and also as a separate composition. In later monuments from present-day Romania and Russia, as well as on Mount Athos, they have been depicted in Paradise, in the scene of the Last Judgment.⁷⁵

72 Meyendorff 1995, 18.

73 Meyendorff 1995, 18.

74 For such apocalyptic motifs in the iconography of the Heavenly Host, see, for instance, Grafova 2012, 148–167, esp. 158–160.

75 See in more detail and with references to earlier studies in Mavrodinova 1999, 160–161.

In the Church of St. Sophia in Okhrid, somewhere around the mid-11th century, when these lands were already under Byzantine rule, a series of Old Testament scenes appeared on orders of the former chartulary of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, Archbishop Leo (1037–1056). The scenes with Old Testament stories can be seen in the third register of the side walls of the bema. Of special importance for us are the scenes of Jacob's Dream (Ladder of Paradise/Ladder of Divine Ascent), the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace (also related to the story of the three youths in Daniel 3:26–56), the Three Angels Visiting Abraham at the oak of Mamre (Gen. 18:1–5), and the Hospitality of Abraham (the Old Testament Trinity) (Gen. 18:6–15), as well as Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac.

Jacob's Dream (Ladder of Divine Ascent) (Gen. 28:10–17) refers to the Virgin Mary cycle, but its initial meaning is related to the Covenant that God made with Jacob, promising him that the land on which he lay would be given to his descendants and would expand in all world directions. Later, the text from *Genesis* 28:10–17 came to be associated (as a precursor) with the Mother of God and would be read at Vespers on all the feast days of the Holy Mother. The scene of Abraham and the three angels also refers to the Holy Mother and to the Annunciation in particular, which is located right next to the scene with Abraham. The idea here is obvious: just like the Forefather Abraham was visited by the heavenly messengers, so did the Holy Virgin, supplicant on behalf of mankind at the Last Judgment, receive the Lord's messenger, St. Gabriel, with the blessed news. The general typology of these scenes is quite transparent in its meaning for art specialists and theologians. The other important scene is the Hospitality of Abraham, or the so-called Old Testament Trinity (Gen. 18:6–15). It is enclosed in a special, red frame that separates it from the scene of Abraham and the angels, although both scenes are 'next to each other' in *Genesis* (18:18–19). The establishment of the covenant between Abraham (and his future descendants, i.e. his people) with God is significant, since it is then that God promises to elevate him to the position of a father of a numerous progeny. The position of this scene corresponds to that of Jacob's Dream on the opposite wall of the bema: there, God is making a covenant with Abraham's grandson. This symbolism of the covenant is further emphasized in the scene of Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac, which is also present in the same cathedral, but next to the apse; the Sacrifice itself is related to the Eucharist. It is a well-known fact that in the Psalters, Abraham's Sacrifice is presented in view of *Psalms* 104:5–11, where God actually reminds Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of the covenant that they had made with Him. And the Sacrifice itself is considered to be a precursor of the Crucifixion: the sacrifice of Christ, when God the Father gives His Son to save mankind. All these Old Testament scenes

at the altar of the Church of St. Sophia in Okhrid give a clear indication of the direction in which the typology of the Old Testament antitype evolved, developing further into a New Testament meaning and message on the basis of the meanings of various scenes from the Old Testament.⁷⁶ It is interesting that such a development can also be found in other monuments, indicating some new tendencies in Byzantine art from the same 11th century, including Hosios Loukas Monastery in Phocis and especially the Church of St. Sophia in Kiev although, according to Liliana Mavrodinova, they “do not give a clear enough picture of the process”.⁷⁷

Next, let us also take a brief look at some frescoes in the two-storey ossuary of Bachkovo Monastery.⁷⁸ The monastery was founded in 1083 by the Georgian brothers Gregorius and Abasius Bakuriani.⁷⁹ According to Liliana Mavrodinova, the fresco layer is most probably dated to the second quarter of the 12th century.⁸⁰ In another study, from 1995, the same author initially chooses a somewhat ‘safer’ option, saying that “the ossuary could hardly have been decorated prior to the 12th century”, before stating categorically shortly afterwards that “the frescoes from the Bachkovo Ossuary [are] from the times of Emperor John II Komnenos (1118–1143)”.⁸¹ For the purpose of our topic, establishing the exact chronological locus of the pictorial art at Bachkovo Monastery is unnecessary; more important is the fact that its first layer fits within the broad time-frame of the study.

The nave of the ossuary itself (the crypt) contains a depiction of the Vision of Prophet Ezekiel from the Valley of Dry Bones (Ez. 37:2–9),⁸² which in later Christian monuments came to be associated with the Resurrection of Christ. The earliest representation of this theme can be found in one of the oldest pictorial monuments of Christianity, the Dura-Europos synagogue (c. 224–225). As Elka Bakalova points out, there, “the prophecy of Ezekiel is interpreted in the context of traditional messianic ideas”.⁸³

On the vault and the walls of the crypt narthex is depicted a scene that is quite significant for us: that of the Last Judgment.⁸⁴ The scene includes the

76 For all these details, see Mavrodinova 1999, 162–165.

77 Mavrodinova 1999, 165; see also Lazarev 1960, 46–49 and ill. 8–9, 17.

78 For further details, see Bakalova 1977.

79 Bakalova 1977, 14–16.

80 Mavrodinova 1989, 243–251.

81 Mavrodinova 1995, 33–34; on various other datings, see again Mavrodinova 1995, 33, n. 44, see also Bakalova 1977, 142.

82 For further details, see Bakalova 1977, 45–49; see also Lazarev 1986, 108.

83 Bakalova 1977, 47.

84 For further details, see Bakalova 1977, 55–67.

Holy Mother of God, surrounded by angels in Paradise, as well as Abraham's bosom—the Forefather Abraham with the soul of the beggar Lazarus on his lap, among the souls of his righteous offspring (*cf.* Luke 16:22–31).⁸⁵ Here, however, Abraham is not accompanied by Isaac and Jacob, like in Kostur/Kastoria. This fact led Liliana Mavrodinova to assume that this specific version of the story of the three forefathers in Paradise most probably originated from the eastern provinces of Byzantium, since in the Constantinople monuments Abraham is depicted alone with his descendants in the heavenly regions.⁸⁶

For our topic, it is also important to note Elka Bakalova's opinion on the composition of the Last Judgment scene: "The attention of the iconographers was not focused on the terrifying image of retribution. Instead, the Last Judgment is presented first and foremost as the beginning of the Kingdom of the Righteous" (*sic*).⁸⁷ And another significant clarification, which concerns both Western and Eastern Europe: the composition of the Last Judgment scene appeared much later than the emergence of the concept of the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the Judgment, which can be found among the prophets and has been predicted also by the earliest Christian authors. This depiction appeared, quite expectedly, only after first being written down as text—in the eschatological literature both in the West and in the East of Europe. Its peak was in the large compositions of the 11th and 12th centuries, which are of particular interest for this study, seen both in illuminations (in 11th-century manuscripts) and in mosaic ensembles and frescoes from Byzantium and Rus'.⁸⁸

The other interesting group of images found in Bulgarian churches from the period after the fall of Bulgaria under Byzantine rule and until its liberation in 1185/1186 is that of the Old Testament prophets predicting the coming of the Messiah. Usually, during this period they were already being depicted with paper scrolls containing their prophecies—a process that had begun only in the 6th century and which had first appeared in manuscripts.⁸⁹ The earliest depictions of prophets in present-day Bulgaria can be found in the north-western part of the dome of the Church of St. George (the Rotunda) in Sofia. They are from the first medieval layer of frescoes, the result of devout iconographic work dating probably from the late 10th or the very early 11th century.⁹⁰ These depictions are particularly important for us not only in view of the fact that Sredets

85 Bakalova 1977, 64; see also Lazarev 1986, 108, Tables—ill. 362.

86 Mavrodinova 1995, 33; Mavrodinova 1999, 167.

87 Bakalova 1977, 64.

88 Bakalova 1977, 64–66 and n. 18, 20 and 21.

89 Mavrodinova 1999, 191–192 and n. 138, 139, 140.

90 Mavrodinova 1995, 35; Mavrodinova 1999, 192.

(Sofia) was so often mentioned in the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism, but also because the remains of St. John of Rila were preserved namely in this city (from the end of the 10th century to 1195). To the above-said I would like to add the conviction of historians that it was Sredets that sheltered the Bulgarian patriarch Damian after the fall of Preslav in 971,⁹¹ as well as the following: 1) Sredets was known as a center of the Cometopuli dynasty during the 970s and 980s⁹² and, 2) it was around the year 1000 and immediately afterwards (especially from 1001 onwards) that the Sredets region became the scene of constant warfare between Byzantines and Bulgarians.⁹³ Although a large part of the images of the prophets from this initial fresco layer are severely damaged or even fully erased by time, it is nevertheless known that among them were depicted Jonah and John the Baptist. Later, in the second half of the 12th century, twelve new figures of prophets appeared in the same church, among which can be discerned David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Micah, as well as some of the messages on their scrolls.⁹⁴

The basilica of St. Nichola near the fortress at Melnik also contains depictions of the prophets Jeremiah and Isaiah, which can be found on the antepse arch. The church is usually dated to the 12th–13th century,⁹⁵ which makes it possible to connect it, to a higher or lesser degree, to the time period in question.

3.2 Topography and Names of the *Evil Forces* before the *End of Times* in the Notions of the Danube Bulgarians

What are the texts from Danube Bulgaria which can provide the most appropriate source base for interpreting the notions of the *End* among the Danube Bulgarians—an *End* that was expected to be triggered by the *Evil Forces* known as the ‘peoples of Gog and Magog’ or the so-called Ishmaelites? Quite understandably, these are, above all, works from the oft-mentioned here historical apocalyptic literature, the interpretation and specifics of which will be

91 Snegarov 1995/1, 8–14; Nikolov 2005, 167.

92 See esp. Nikolov 2005, 167, who claims that “during the period 971–986, Serdica probably was a temporary state-political center of the Bulgarian Tsardom”.

93 Nikolov 2005, 167—referencing mainly the accounts of John Skylitzes; see also Mavrodinova 1999, 192–194.

94 For further details, see Tsoncheva 1979, 74–82; Mavrodinova 1999, 193–197, ill. 14 and 15, as well as the table on p. 215–216, showing the corresponding images to the Bulgarian ones in Byzantium and Serbia.

95 Mavrodinova 1975, 10, image 23; Mavrodinova 1999, 197.

discussed further below. The ones that constitute a particular interest for me in the present study date from the second half of the 11th century and until the end of the 12th, and are naturally marked by the archetypal prophecies of Daniel and Isaiah.

Before attempting to outline the 'Bulgarian' notions regarding these *Evil Forces* and their topography and titling against the backdrop of the ones analyzed in the previous chapter, I feel it necessary to make a certain clarification. Namely, in view of the genre specificities and the Christian mental attitudes that were typical for the Middle Ages, the analysis and interpretation of such historical apocalyptic works first of all need to take into account the normativeness of certain texts for that time period, beginning with the Bible and especially the books of the Old Testament. They contain a number of symbols and (proto)images, which were often used by the medieval Christians in order for the latter to establish a strictly defined perception that it was precisely *their own* tsardom/empire/kingdom that was *chosen by God* and had a *salvational mission* for mankind before the Second Coming of Christ. These findings are, of course, 'gospel truths' for analyzing such texts, and also the political ideology, which in many cases—both in the East and in the West of Europe—has turned out to be closely intertwined namely with historical apocalyptic works. Historical apocalypticism contains numerous references to various normative *figures* from the Old Testament, including Moses, Solomon, David, etc., as well as universal *codes* that have been repeatedly studied by various theologians and scholars.

It seems to me truly important to first specify what should be considered when examining texts of the providential kind, such as the historical apocalyptic ones. First and foremost, it is imperative to recognize that the interpretation of such works should be subject to the basic rules and requirements for the hermeneutics of both Testaments in general, and the *Book of Revelation* of St. John in particular.⁹⁶ Therefore, the study should begin with a 'dense description' and analysis of the specific historical context that has generated a particular *archetypal* text and only then look for the allegorical and above all spiritual/symbolic interpretation of various parts (symbols, signs) from it. If we were to paraphrase the message of the Holy Fathers in this regard, then without a complete and thorough first (or literal, also called concrete historical) level we should not expect 'good results' from the other levels of interpreta-

96 See Shivarov 2005, as well as Shivarov 1999, 65–159; regarding the interpretation of the *Revelation*, the standard (and best) work remains that of St. Andreas of Caesarea (563–614). For more on his position in the political thought of Bulgaria in the Early Middle Ages, see, for instance, Nikolov 2006, 206–209.

tion. This, however, does not mean that we can lightly brush aside the ‘folkloric’ images and notions, since already at the dawn of the Christian historical apocalypticism various (often unknown) authors intertwined numerous pre-Christian motifs and perceptions into many such texts. Similar transgressions of ‘folkloric’ data into the heart of the interpretative texts from Bulgaria after the second half of the 11th century have long been discovered, which renders as unnecessary an extensive overview here. Another question is how to ‘decipher’ the new message encoded through them, since it (may) create new symbolic levels and (may) lead to new interpretations that are relevant precisely in terms of the time/environment that produced them. In this connection, another ‘gospel truth’ is that in such ‘times of crisis’ (and for Bulgaria the years after 1018, as well as the period immediately after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, were precisely such ‘crisis times’, with regard to the ideas of the Tsardom and its capital center!), certain symbols, images and *common places* from the Holy Scripture underwent a reinterpretation, in view of the new messages and expectations.

Such ‘novelties’ were usually adapted in accordance with the specific addressees (on a local and regional level, but also on an elitist level as a whole), because this type of literature—and these texts were essentially outside of liturgics—permitted such intentional ‘distortions’ of a given archetypal text. Therefore, it is important to also take into account the *places* where a ‘new’ text deviated from its (prototypal) archetype, as well as the *images* and *messages* that were intentionally created (or maintained) by later authors through such deviations. It is from such a viewpoint that I find it most appropriate to seek answers to the questions of *why*, *how* and *with what ideological purpose* the Bulgarian authors reformulated some passages/images/symbols from the ‘fundamental’ normative texts (i.e. from the meaning-giving protoimages and paradigms from the Bible). This can, in fact, also help achieve a more adequate ‘translation’ of the universal codes and messages from the Holy Scripture, at the level of specific ‘national’/regional ideological and eschatological messages.

Next, it is necessary to take into account the *imaginativeness*, which was widely used by the unknown authors in the creation of the new ideologemae-and-mythologemae. In other words, one must ‘translate’ into a modern language the Bulgarian scribes’ new meaning and new messages, which quite often referred to various archetypal images with clear notional—and hence, ideological—connotations. In this connection, I completely agree with Ivan Biliarsky regarding a text from the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism, which shall be discussed numerous times below: *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, also called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* by Iordan Ivanov and best-known as such among historians. This work, says Biliarsky, “is not an original text, but

a compilation ... and its essential basis is neither folkloric, nor dualistic, and even less patriotic. The *Tale* stems mostly from the biblical and Middle Eastern prophetic literature of the apocalyptic type ...". It strives to reflect the stages of "the creation of a new identity for the newly-Christianized Bulgarians, by placing ... two main accents in this respect": on the neophyte Bulgarians as a 'New Israel', and on "the unity between Byzantines and Bulgarians, who are presented in the text as a united nation inhabiting a single territory under the same rule".⁹⁷ Precisely such a thesis has been developed during the last couple of decades by Dmitrii Polyviannyi,⁹⁸ as well as by the author of the present study,⁹⁹ Veselina Vachkova¹⁰⁰ and Nikolai Shivarov.¹⁰¹

The *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* is not a recording and a recasting of a folkloric (pagan) epic, but a combination of various traditions, in which the main emphasis falls on the biblical metatext, and especially on the idea of altering the *Chosen People* of the Old Testament (the concept of a 'New Israel', easily recognizable among a number of Christian kingdoms in Europe during the Middle Ages).¹⁰² Naturally, such an essentially correct assertion should not be absolutized, since such literary works, as has been pointed out before, in fact contain a number of old mythological (or folkloric) images. The latter are most often reformulated in the new Christian context, and this, namely, is one of my tasks here: to attempt to interpret their new meanings and messages at a specific time and place, as well as in a specific politico-ideological situation (historical context).

And so, what is the situation with regard to the *Evil Forces*, invading the Bulgarian Tsardom before the *End of the world*, as seen in the Bulgarian medieval apocalyptic texts? Which are the apocalyptic invaders in this case? Were they nomads, spreading violence from the north, stemming from the 'unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog' and thus crossing the boundary between the uncivilized ('barbarians') and the civilized peoples, i.e. the Danube River? Or were they actual 'Ishmaelites'/'Ismaelians', i.e. Muslims?

It is immediately noticeable that in the Bulgarian cycle of apocalyptic texts, the invaders before the *End of Times* are most often called 'Ugrians'/'*Vugri*' (i.e. the Magyars) or 'Pechenegs'.¹⁰³ The first serious clash between the Bulgarians and the Magyars was in the 890s and more precisely in 894–896,

97 Biliarsky 2011, 9–10; see also Biliarsky 2013, 3–4.

98 Polyviannyi 2000, 116–125.

99 Stepanov S.a. [2002], 122–129; Stepanov 2007b, 108–118.

100 Vachkova S.a., 183–187, 189–198; Vachkova 2005, 38–48, 92–103.

101 Shivarov 2002, 291–304; see Kaimakamova 2011, 172–173, 177–179, 196.

102 Biliarsky 2011, 48–49.

103 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 135–136, 156, 198, 202.

in the early years of the reign of the Bulgarian ruler Simeon (893–927). During the times of his successor, Tsar Petur (927–969, † 970), these same Magyars undertook a number of further attacks, especially between the 930s and 960s,¹⁰⁴ although Khristo Dimitrov is inclined to believe that a Bulgarian–Magyar union (*sic*) was in place between the 930s and the 950s. This union, according to Dimitrov, was in fact a continuation of their earlier union from the times of Tsar Simeon that was directed against the Byzantine support for the Serbians of Caslav Klonimirovic, who had rebelled against Bulgarian rule.¹⁰⁵

It seems all too likely that the Magyar invasions against the Christian people of Bulgaria were placed in the memory ‘mold’ of the Bulgarians both in written texts and later in folklore, since they occurred before 992 (or 1000, according to another chronology, typical for the Eastern Orthodox peoples influenced by the Byzantine culture), i.e. precisely at a time when the Second Coming of Christ was expected.¹⁰⁶

It is clear that these events had a strong impact on the Bulgarians’ way of thinking also for another, far more prosaic reason: the Magyars, invading before the *End of Times*, were still pagans, which made them easily identifiable according to the cliché “Gog and Magog attacking the Christian (i.e. Bulgarian) tsardom” before the expected *End* and the Second Coming. Moreover, the Magyars invaded Bulgaria from the north (!), across the Danube River (!), and were pagans (!), i.e. they corresponded to all the indicators in the definitions of the ‘unclean peoples’ Gog and Magog.

The Magyar invasions continued also during the years of Byzantine rule over the Bulgarian lands.¹⁰⁷ In 1072–1073, the Magyars attacked Belgrade—a fact that was well documented in the Magyar chronicles. It is mentioned in them that Pechenegs helped the Bulgarians and Byzantines to defend the city of Belgrade, with the following detail deserving special attention: the imperial army also included Arab mercenaries.¹⁰⁸ The participation of Saracens as Byzantine mercenaries has been documented in several imperial chryso-bulls: in 1074, during the reign of Michael VII Douka,¹⁰⁹ in 1079, during the

104 For more details, see Zlatarski 1971, 518–519, 542–546; Dimitrov 1998, 71–76; Todorov 2010, 312–326.

105 See in further detail and an analysis of the opinions of other researchers, Dimitrov 1998, 72–76, and esp. 73–74.

106 See more in Mollov 1997, *passim*; for the purely event-related aspect of these relations, see also Makk 1999, 25–33.

107 See further details in Dimitrov 1998, 93–104, as well as Shepard 2011c, 55–83.

108 See Dimitrov 1998, 95–96.

109 Michaelis Attaleiatae 1965/VI, 196.

rule of Nikephoros III Botaneiates,¹¹⁰ and in 1086, during the years of Alexios I Komnenos.¹¹¹ Similar, although somewhat unclear, accounts can be found in the writings of Anna Komnene. In her *Alexiad*, the princess notes that during the years when her father, Alexios I Komnenos, opposed the Normans of Robert Guiscard, in the Byzantine armies served people from the so-called Turks who lived near Okhrid (also called *Vardariotai* Turks). She associated them with the Saracens, but they could also have been Seljuk Turks.¹¹²

And another detail in connection to the extensive theme of the *End of Times* before 992 (with fundamental elements including *the tsardom, the Last Emperor, the chosen people, the center of the world, the invaders* before the coming of Antichrist, etc.) in Bulgaria: the connection between the Bulgarian lands and the idea of the *chosen people*, protected by *chosen saints*. A recent special study of the early sermons of St. John of Rila, undertaken by Ancho Kaloianov, revealed that prior to 986, the saint had been spontaneously canonized in Sredets.¹¹³ It is hardly a coincidence that in these *Sermons*, Rila Mountain in Bulgaria was likened to ... Zion, i.e. the absolute 'center' that often replaced Jerusalem and, more importantly, marked the Promised Land where the Lord was born, then crucified, before rising again to appear in this very land during the Second Coming, according to the Scriptures and legends, which are truly '*memories of*'. This kind of parallelism-and-duality between the Promised Land and the Bulgarian Tsardom is also hardly coincidental, since it is a clear sign of the chosenness of the latter and hence obviously suggests the idea that the Last King, or Tsar, came from within the Bulgarian borders. Whether the canonization of St. John of Rila had anything to do with the arduous struggle of Tsar Samuil and the Bulgarians against the Byzantines of the basileus Basil II that started precisely in the 980s, or with the Sredets province (*komitat*) that was governed by Samuil's father, Komit Nikola, prior to 971; as well as whether the name "Sredets" with its inner symbolism (stemming from the Bulgarian word *sreda*, 'center') and charge had an impact on the choice of this place as the final resting place of St. John of Rila's remains, are all questions that entail a certain degree of deviation from my topic and for this reason shall remain unaddressed here.¹¹⁴

110 *Chrysobullum Nicephori Botaniatis* 1965/vI, 17.

111 *Chrysobullum Alexii Comneni* 1965/vI, 30.

112 Annae Komnenae 1972/vIII, 43=IV.4.

113 Kaloianov 2009, 37–45.

114 In this connection, see the works of Ivan Duichev, Todor Mollov, as well as Vachkova 2007, 3–40, esp. 31–33.

Let us now direct our attention to the aforementioned Pechenegs, the next nomadic tribes which invaded from the north/northeast—and again across the Danube—into the Bulgarian lands. In the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, the first Bulgarian ruler of Danube Bulgaria, Asparukh (called Ispor in the chronicle), is presented by the unknown scribe as a victor over the ‘Ishmaelites’, appearing later in the same text as the ruler who fell in battle against those same ‘Ishmaelites’, “on the Danube”.¹¹⁵ The specific passage goes as follows:

And then after him [Tsar Slav] another tsar was found in the Bulgarian land, a *detishte*¹¹⁶ carried in a basket for three years; he was given the name Tsar Ispor and [he] took over the Bulgarian tsardom. This tsar built great cities: on the Danube, the city of Dorostorum; a great rampart between the Danube and the sea; and he also built the city of Pliska. This tsar slew a multitude of Ishmaelites. [...] Tsar Ispor ruled over the Bulgarian land for one hundred and seventy-two years and then the Ishmaelites slew him on the Danube.¹¹⁷

Naturally, this does not mean—as indeed is unconditionally accepted by a number of contemporary scholars—that Ispor/Asparukh perished by the hand of a Khazar somewhere along the Danube River,¹¹⁸ because the Khazars widely perceived the Danube as their western border in the 670s, that is, to the point where Asparukh was allegedly chased by the Khazars.¹¹⁹ Neither was it possible for him to die by the hand of an actual Muslim. Perhaps another line of thought is more appropriate in this case: that Asparukh has been presented by the anonymous author of the *Chronicle* as the victim of imaginary invaders, infringing on the Christian Empire through the well-known Danube River that served as a boundary of the Roman/Byzantine civilization.

Also hardly coincidental is the fact that Ispor/Asparukh is associated with the construction of a *prezid*, a wall or protective embankment, precisely on the Danube river bank and reaching all the way to the Black Sea. It is true that

115 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 196, 199–200; Petkov 2008, 195.

116 Bulg. *detishte*, denoting a child of immense size, strong and heavy for its age, from *dete*, “child”—*Translator’s note*.

117 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 199–200.

118 On the notion of the Danube as a *boundary* of the Christian and, prior to that, Roman, Empire and civilization, see Tăpkova-Zaimova 1976; Mollov 1997, 33, 35, 67–69, 102, 105, 109 and n. 9; Stepanov 2003, 14–27; Vachkova 2004, 135–150; especially on the Slavic visions and in particular those of the Rus’ on the same issue, see Petrukhin 2013, 35–47.

119 On this concept, see the correspondence between Hasdai ben Shaprut and the Khazar khagan-bek Joseph from the mid-10th century in Kokovtsov 1932.

the Bulgars fortified these lands with a series of ramparts and ditches, something that has been known for a long time, mainly as a result of archaeological research.¹²⁰ The allusion in this case, however, is most probably with the barrier that Alexander the Great built in the Caucasus against the steppe 'barbarians' coming from the north. Thus, it is as if the anonymous author of the *Chronicle* tried to persuade his readers that Asparukh had surrounded the lands of civilization with a wall, to keep it safe from the invading 'barbarians' that inhabited the steppe north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. At the very end, the same text mentions the actual Pechenegs, this time labeled as "infidels and lawless", as well as "violators and deceivers".¹²¹

As was already mentioned, Anisava Miltenova is inclined to date this apocryphal work to "around the end of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th", or "around the first decades of the 12th century".¹²² Todor Mollov is also inclined to accept that the text was written after the famous Battle of Levounion (in 1091), when the Byzantine basileus Alexios I Komnenos inflicted a severe defeat on the Pechenegs and the Uzes.¹²³ It is also known that the Cumans, mentioned in the same text, began their attacks on the Balkan Peninsula during the 1070s and 1080s.¹²⁴

The Pechenegs began their attacks on the Bulgarian lands in the 1030s.¹²⁵ By then, the independent Bulgarian Tsardom was no more, since it was conquered by the Byzantines in 1018 and its lands up to the Danube River became a part of the Byzantine Empire. The Pechenegs, therefore, formally invaded Byzantine lands that were inhabited by Bulgarians at that time. The direction of their invasions, as that of the Magyar ones earlier on, was again from the north southwards; and again they had to cross the Danube! The reason for this is because from a geographical point of view, during the 10th and early 11th century the Pechenegs inhabited the lands north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, generally between the Don and Dniester Rivers, or, in other words, to the north–northwest of the Caucasus. So in the eyes of the unknown Bulgarian scribe from the end of the 11th century (or the beginning of the 12th?) who created the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, the Pechenegs perfectly fit the cliché

120 Rashev 1982; Squatriti 2005, 59–90.

121 Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 198, 202; Petkov 2008, 199.

122 Miltenova 2006, 859–860.

123 Mollov 1997, 190.

124 On these, see Pavlov 1990, 16–26; Stoianov 2005, 3–25; Stoianov 2006; Vásáry 2005; on the Cumans in general, see Golden 1992; Golden 1995–1997, 99–122; Golden 2003.

125 On the Danube boundary during the 11th–12th centuries and, in particular, on the Pechenegs, Cumans and Magyars along it, see Madgearu 2013, 115–166; see also Täpkova-Zaimova 1993, 95–101.

of the ‘unclean peoples’ Gog and Magog that lived in the steppe north of the Caucasus and invaded from the north, crossing the Danube River.

Together with the Ugrians (Magyars) and the Pechenegs, the so-called ‘blonde beards’¹²⁶ were the other invaders that can often be found in the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts. Some scholars have long since identified them as the well-known Norman mercenaries in the Byzantine armies from the first half of the 11th century, and, in particular, with the aforementioned Norwegian Harald Hardrada and his band, whose help was decisive in the suppression of the first great uprising of the Bulgarians against Byzantium in 1040/1041, led by Petur Delian.¹²⁷ But it was only after the First Crusade of 1095/1096–1099 that people began to use the names ‘blonde race’/‘blonde people’/‘blonde beards’ to identify and distinguish the Latin-speaking crusaders and the peoples of Western Europe in general.¹²⁸ In this case it is clear that the invaders were not identified via the well-known labels ‘Ishmaelites’ or ‘Gog and Magog’/‘unclean peoples’ (or through other similar archetypal epithets), but with the help of the distinguishable physical traits and features of the specific ‘people’, i.e. the blonde beards and the generally light skin and hair color of the men from Western and especially Northern Europe.

At the same time, these apocalyptic texts and especially the more popular ones such as *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah about the Future Times and about the Kings, and about Antichrist Who Is to Come*, as well as *Interpretation of Daniel*¹²⁹ reveal a specific overlapping between the ‘blonde beards’, the ‘Ugrians/*Vugri*’ (Magyars) and the ‘Ishmaelites’, all of them in connection with battles between the Bulgarians (in particular, the so-called Tsar Gagen, who was actually the real historical figure of Petur Delian) and various ‘violators’ of the Bulgarian land. These battles were waged in the Skopie area, on Ovche Pole (“Sheep’s Field”) and on Graovo Pole, as well as near still-existing small towns and cities in present-day Bulgaria, Greece and Northern Macedonia, including Zemen, Pernik, Sofia (appearing as Sredets in the texts), Kiustendil (Velbuzhd in the texts), Strumitsa, Thessaloniki, etc. The anonymous Bulgarian scribe clearly chose not to focus on the direction of the invasion into the *Holy*—meaning Bulgarian—*Land*, since the ‘nomads’ in this specific case came not from the north, but from the west, from the lands of present-day Italy. With regard to the Bulgarian lands, therefore, they were neither a northern people (the ‘Gog and Magog’ cliché), nor a southern or eastern one (the ‘Ishmaelites’ cliché). For

126 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 93–94, 135, 155, 157; Petkov 2008, 204, 208.

127 See Petrov 1986, 36–40; Litavrin 1987, 288–303.

128 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 93–94.

129 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 135 and n. 8, 136, 155–156.

these reasons they were not easily 'recognizable' via the paradigmatic models of the Holy Script. It must be pointed out once again that their original, albeit *exo*-name, which became known in the West at least from the 8th century onwards, appeared in sources in the form of *Nor(th)mani*—a direct allusion to people coming from the North (or literally “northern people”/“northern men”).

The apocalyptic text known as *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah about the Future Times and about the Kings, and about Antichrist Who Is to Come* directly states that “in these years, the Ishmaelites shall come from the northern (*sic!*) lands and shall go to the city of Thessaloniki ... And the Thessalonians shall come out against the *Vugri* ...”.¹³⁰

The contamination of the archetypal 'Ishmaelites' with the real historical Magyars/*Vugri*/Ugrians here is evident and hardly needs any further interpreting. But there is one thing that should not be missed here—that there is an explicit mention of the north as the direction from which the invaders attacked, while in view of the actual geographical situation at the time, Muslims could have attacked the Bulgarian lands from the south. According to Alexander Nikolov (an opinion, shared with the author in a private conversation), these same Muslims could be associated with the clans from Volga Bulgaria that had settled in the Magyar kingdom at some point during the 11th century.¹³¹ It is still largely unclear when exactly and from where these Muslims arrived in Hungary. They could have come from the Khazar Khaganate or from Volga Bulgaria, from Southeastern Europe, or even from Khwarazm, along with the Hungarian tribes that migrated westward in the late 9th century; or during the rule of Prince Taksony (?–c. 970), or maybe even during the 10th and 11th centuries.¹³²

In the so-called *Hungarian Anonymous* (a Hungarian chronicle from the late 12th or 13th century) it is said that Muslims from the lands of Bular (*sic*) came to Hungary, with most scholars today believing this to be a migration from Volga Bulgaria that occurred during the times of the above-mentioned Taksony; although “nothing corroborates this text”, as Nora Berend points out.¹³³ Until the beginning of this millennium, a single Muslim settlement has been

130 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 156; Petkov 2008, 209.

131 On these Hungarian 'Muslims', Pechenegs and Cumans that guarded the borders of the Hungarian kingdom, see Berend 2001, 64–68; Berend 2002, 200, 203–205, 207; Norris 1993, 27.

132 Berend 2001, 64–65 and n. 83, 84, 85, 86 and 87—for the various viewpoints in modern historiography; see also Norris 1993, 26–27 and n. 25.

133 Berend 2001, 65.

excavated on the territory of Hungary and the findings there cannot be dated before the 11th century.¹³⁴

Abu Hamid al-Garnati wrote in the mid-12th century that two different groups of Muslims lived in Hungary at that time; he also assumed that they had come from different places. This traveller from Umayyad Spain spent some time in Hungary in 1150/1, while also staying in Bashghird (present-day Bashkortostan in the Russian Federation—*Author's note*) for three whole years.¹³⁵ It would be logical, however, to wonder whether Abu Hamid al-Garnati has mixed up the information on Hungary in Europe with that concerning 'Magna Hungaria'. In the 12th and 13th centuries, that territory still contained remnants of tribes that spoke Ugrian languages and kept the memory of their Magyar ancestors of old, before the latter had settled first in the interfluvium between the Dnieper and the Danube (in the 830s–890s) and later, at the very end of the 9th century, moved westward to conquer the land of present-day Hungary. Because it is namely in present-day Bashkortostan (also known as Bashkiria), situated along the rivers Kama, Ural, Tobol and Volga and the surrounding territories, that this 'Magna Hungaria' was actually located. In the period between the 10th and the 12th centuries, these lands were under the strong influence of Khazaria mostly, but also of Khwarazm and Volga Bulgaria, i.e. of Islam, in short. The latter is of particular importance, since the Hungarian Muslims appear in the sources not only as 'Ishmaelitae', 'Bissermini/Bezermen/Buzurmen' and 'Saraceni', but also under the name 'Caliz/Kalez/Qualiz'; this is a version of the original Khwarazm.

In general, according to the authoritative opinion of Nora Berend, "Muslims constituted a small minority in the kingdom" of the Hungarians, just like the Jews.¹³⁶ As to the Latin and Arabic sources that alleged of the existence of Muslims in Hungary, they were all left by authors who had never lived in the Hungarian kingdom for a longer period of time. Moreover, they all followed the specifics of their respective genres, including the well-known distortions of information that were typical for the encyclopedias and travel literature, with their characteristic *topoi*, deviations and distortions, resulting from the attitude/knowledge of their specific authors.¹³⁷

134 Berend 2001, 65 and n. 89, 68. Harry Norris also highlights the fact that it was only during the reign of Istvan II (1115–1131) and Geza II (1141–1161) that this 'half-Muslim' (*sic*) population gained considerable freedoms, like serving as border guards or performing other duties of a civil or military nature (Norris 1993, 27).

135 Berend 2001, 66; Norris 1993, 29.

136 Berend 2001, 67.

137 Berend 2001, 67–68.

Naturally, such an opportunity for interpretation as the one suggested by Alexander Nikolov should not be missed. And yet, there remains the problem with the specific Bulgarian written sources, which never mention an invasion of Muslims from the Hungarian kingdom.

In this particular case, it seems quite probable that the unknown Bulgarian scribe had 'forgotten' the direction-and-position of the 'Ishmaelites' of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. But he remembered something much more important: that the invaders had to enter the holy space of the Christian Kingdom to punish the new 'chosen people', the Bulgarians.¹³⁸ What we see here, just as in the above-presented case of the Rus', is the invention of a 'false' geography of the Ishmaelites, which is clearly not the one contained in the text of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. At the same time, we are confronted with some actual historical events that have taken place in the Bulgarian lands from the mid-10th century onwards, as well as in 1040/1041, but presented in a typical apocalyptic framework.

In view of some of the subtitles in this book, another *topos* found in texts from the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic cycle, is the place of the battle against the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog'. According to the Old Testament, it had to occur on the plain of Jericho, while the Byzantine apocalyptic texts 'relocated' this battle to the field near the present-day city of Haifa in Israel. At the same time, the Bulgarian apocalypticists from the 11th century onwards preferred to mark as significant such places as Ovche Pole, Graovo Pole, and also Edrilo Pole.¹³⁹ The place of the battle has been brought to memory through an archetypal text—the battle unfolded on a field! But it would be only natural to pose the following question: why did the unknown scribe need to mention so many different fields on the territories of present-day Bulgaria and Macedonia? And if Graovo Pole can be perceived both in the light of the adjective "pea" (Bulg. *grakhovo*, making it literary "Pea Field"), and of the Graovsko region in modern Bulgaria, then could Edrilo Pole be interpreted as Odrino Pole, as the field near the city of Adrianopolis/Edirne (Odrin in Bulgarian), as Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anisava Miltenova suggest?¹⁴⁰

In my opinion, a further possibility for the 'translation' of "Edrilo Pole" should also be considered: it is possible to associate it with the concept of the 'core' (Bulg. *iadro*), i.e. the 'center'. This connection has already been made by Todor Mollov. In this particular case, it will obviously be necessary to

138 For more details, see Ivanova 2006, 67–70; Mollov 1997, 110, 131–155.

139 Alexander 1985, 190, 192; Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 155–156, and n. 19; Petkov 2008, 208.

140 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 156 and n. 21; see also 238 and n. 19—"Adrino pole".

emphasize both the phonetic proximity of *edrilo* with *iadro*, 'core', as well as to note that the 'final eschatological battle' before the Second Coming of Christ will be fought by presumption in the *center/core* of the sacred-and-holy space of the Kingdom.

The medieval Bulgarian historical apocalyptic text called *Vision of the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times* contains an interesting *topos* which could be associated with the notion of the 'center', 'heart', 'core'. This is the well-known and briefly discussed here term Mezina Land (*Mezina zemia*), which can be seen in this same text from the third quarter of the 13th century. According to two of the most renowned scholars of old Bulgarian historical apocalypticism in the last thirty years, Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anisava Miltenova, this *Vision* dates before the 1280s, but was not compiled earlier than 1261.¹⁴¹

It is a well-known fact that at least from the mid-10th century, the Byzantines commonly called the Bulgarians *Moesi*, and their land, *Moesia*. I shall mention only two examples here. The first one is the already mentioned Leo the Deacon (the second half of the same century), and the second example is Theophylaktos, the archbishop of Okhrid from the 12th century. The latter author claimed that St. Climent of Okhrid originated from the "European *Moesi*".¹⁴² It seems that Paul Stephenson is right in stating the following:

In calling Bulgarians by the name of an ancient subject people (*Moesi*—Author's note) they (*the Bulgarians*—Author's note) were not merely described, they were "acquired" (*quote marks mine*—Author's note); the polity which dominated the northern Balkans for three centuries preceding Basil II's reconquest was denied a contemporary identity; its distinct origins and development were masked by a rigid framework of representation.¹⁴³

It is thus clear that in this case, one of the possibilities for us is to connect Mezina Land with the ancient Moesia and its inhabitants, the *Moesi*. *Moesia* and Mezina Land are in a very clear relation to each other, since it was in the center of ancient *Moesia* that the capital center of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom, Turnovgrad, was located. Such an interpretation can also be confirmed by the text of the *Vision*. In it, it is said that men will see precisely in this

141 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 229–230, 232–233, 237–238.

142 See Lev D'iakon 1988, 36–37, 44–45, 48; Milev 1966, 174.

143 Stephenson 2000, 256.

land the blossoming of Christ's kingdom of righteous men and women; and the scepter of this kingdom is of the root of Jesse.¹⁴⁴

Another interpretation is also possible: let us assume that the unknown Bulgarian monk wished to demonstrate his erudition by using some old *topoi* from classical Antiquity.¹⁴⁵ There is yet another possible 'reading' of Mezina Land: it sounds quite close to "Moses' Land", i.e. the land of the 'chosen people', which has already been commented on by historians.¹⁴⁶

Despite all these possible interpretations, which to one degree or another are consistent with the idea of the 'center', and therefore with the visions of the Promised Land and the Holy Land, I will again allow myself to recall an older suggestion of mine¹⁴⁷ regarding the interpretation of the above term. I feel that it gives a more adequate opportunity for decyphering the hidden meaning of this term.¹⁴⁸ In Greek *mesos* means "in the center", *n.* 'middle', 'center', 'midst'¹⁴⁹ and it is this word and its meaning that can be thought to have inspired the Bulgarian scribe to use it as a multifaceted message to his erudite readers. Thus, said scribe presented the lands of his tsardom as located 'in the center' of the world, just as the Promised Land had its center in Jerusalem, while itself being at the heart and center of the world. As is well known, the Byzantines viewed Constantinople in a similar manner. In texts like the *Visions* (and in apocalyptic literature as a whole), 'allusions' like this were not uncommon, and the example with names such as Moesia, Moses, *Mezina* seems to confirm this observation.

A similar 'play' also cannot be excluded as a probable explanation for the *transfer-and-translation* of Mount Tabor as "the New Jerusalem, called the city of Constantine", as it can be found in the same Bulgarian apocalyptic cycle of texts, as well as in *Vision of the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times*, in particular.¹⁵⁰ This sacred mountain was not only the place of Christ's transformation,¹⁵¹ but also a 'Promised Land', the place (*cf.* Ps. 88, 13), where the Jews decided to become 'people of God'.¹⁵² It seems to me that such a notion, namely the perception of Mount Tabor as located in Constantinople,

144 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 229, 239 and n. 9 and 10; Petkov 2008, 528.

145 Kabakčiev 1995, 9.

146 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 239 and n. 9.

147 Made in a separate paper in 2001 in Plovdiv, see Stepanov S.a., 122–129.

148 See also Stepanov 2007b, 113–115.

149 Starogrutsko-bulgarski rechnik 1943, 497–498.

150 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 233, 238; Petkov 2008, 528, 529.

151 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 240 and n. 17.

152 Stepanov 2008, 114.

could bring up one more image in our minds. In Hebrew, *tabur* (*tavor* in Greek) meant “navel” (*cf.* the Greek *omphalos*), i.e. equivalent to ‘center’, ‘core’.¹⁵³ It then becomes clear that in this text, the relation Tabor–Constantinople makes the latter seem ultra-sacred, since, on the one hand, this city was called the ‘New Jerusalem’, and, on the other, when someone entered its gates, he reached “the place called Tabor” and then could see “the holy wisdom, called Hagia Sophia”,¹⁵⁴ i.e. the Church of the Holy Wisdom, built on the orders of Justinian the Great during the 530s. As was mentioned earlier, this church gradually became emblematic for this ‘God-chosen city’. This leads to another insight: that the sacred *topos* of the Christian Byzantine Empire was marked in this specific text by the gradation of no less than three names.

In a similar way, Mezina Land, i.e. the Christian Bulgarian Tsardom, was presented as the ‘center’, ‘core’ of this world, as a sort of ‘navel’.¹⁵⁵ In fact, the unknown Bulgarian author followed a model of presenting that was already well known from this type of texts: to use the name of Sredets as a means to present the idea of the ‘center’ (*Sredets* stems from the Bulgarian word *sreda*, meaning “middle”, “center”), i.e. the city of Sredets as a center of the territories inhabited by Bulgarians at least from the 9th century onwards. The latter allusion was clear to anyone who was familiar with the dialects of the Slavic languages, i.e. not only the Bulgarians, but also the Serbians and the Rus’. They, too, were Christians from the 9th–10th century onwards and as such were familiar with the notions of the ‘center’ of the Christian tsardom and the concept of the ‘chosen people’ who by presumption inhabited this center. It is for this reason—along with the purely objective reasons of this city’s connection with the Cometopuli—that the name of Sredets comes up often in the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic cycle of the 11th–12th centuries. This is why the anonymous Bulgarian scribe has placed “all the saints of the Bulgarian lands” in Sredets. For this reason, as has been repeatedly demonstrated here regarding the *Sredets* name, this city was perceived as the holy *topos* where events related to the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment could be expected to occur.

Two decades ago, Todor Mollov¹⁵⁶ launched the thesis that Edrilo Pole shows a clear connection to the Bulgarian word *iadro*, ‘core’, as well as that Ovche Pole could be associated with another major center, Sredets, i.e. the ancient

153 Oxford English-Hebrew/Hebrew-English Dictionary 1995, 112, 305.

154 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 233, 238; Petkov 2008, 529.

155 The *omphalos* in the various traditions has amassed an immense amount of literature—see, for instance, Herrmann 1959; Müller 1961; Tilly 2002.

156 Mollov 1997, 45–47, 105, 188–189 and esp. 185, as well as n. 5 and 6.

Serdica and present-day Bulgarian capital, Sofia. As I have briefly mentioned earlier, this theory has undoubtedly solid reasoning, since the Bulgarian word for "middle", *sreda*, is etymologically present in the name of Sredets, i.e. this city was indeed perceived by the medieval Bulgarians as the *middle* of 'their own' (=Bulgarian) tsardom and the lands inhabited by Bulgarians. Mollov, however, goes even further in his analysis, making a connection with the Polar Star, seen as an *axis* in the center of the sacred space. This notion is easily traceable throughout Eurasia, and especially among the steppe peoples. Since according to the 'laws' of mythological thinking, all ultra-significant things-and-events should by definition occur in the *center* of the mythological space, it is not surprising to see that the unknown Bulgarian scribes of this type of texts have connected the 'Ugrians'/'*Vugri*' and the 'Ishmaelites' with Ovche Pole and *Sredets*. The passage that is of interest to us (and is quite long) reads as follows:

And in the year of Tsar Chigochin, the thirty-eighth tsar shall come out of sun-down, from the land of Sar, his name shall be Gagen and he shall be nicknamed Odolian.

He will reign for five years and will be quiet and brave, and a warrior, and the Christians shall come to him crying. And he shall rise, as if born in the grave; and with one of his eyes cut out. He shall gather the western and seacoast troops, and shall take with him thirty-seven loads of gold and a mantle like the stars.

And when he comes, he shall tame the 'blonde-beards' and shall go to the Bulgarian land. [...] Then the Ishmaelites will meet him in battle at Graovo Pole and shall crush his army, he himself shall escape to the city of Zemen. And the Ishmaelites shall scatter and plunder the entire Bulgarian land. [...] Then a maiden shall come out, a saintly one with a beautiful body; she will bring three hundred holy fathers.

And he shall go with the True Cross against the Ishmaelites and a great carnage shall ensue where the two-mouth well is.¹⁵⁷ Much blood shall be shed there.

Tsar Gagen shall slaughter the Ishmaelites; it will be as if God Himself would strike them with His invisible staff. [...] Then, some violators shall emerge from the West, like shameless serpents, and shall go to Ovche Pole with numerous troops.

¹⁵⁷ On the 'two-mouth well' as an allusion for a journey to Paradise, but also to Hell, i.e. along the vertical axis, as well as a kind of 'center' of the Promised Land, see Stepanov 2013, 272–283, as well as further below in the present chapter.

Tsar Gagen shall also go to Ovche Pole, gathering the entire Bulgarian land.

[...] And thereafter [Tsar Gagen] went from Ovche Pole to Edrilo Pole.

A there, a great carnage shall ensue, and a lot of blood shall be spilled ...

And there Tsar Gagen shall fall, and with him more than a thousand men.

[...] And in these years, the Ishmaelites shall emerge from the northern (sic!) lands, and shall go towards the city of Thessaloniki ... [...] Then they shall begin to attack Thessaloniki. And the Thessalonians shall come out against the Vugri ...".¹⁵⁸

The Bulgarian Christians therefore perceived themselves as fatefully connected to the salvation of the world during the *Last Times* and before the Second Coming. This perception was further elaborated in detailed schemes, which was especially clearly seen after the unsuccessful uprisings against the Byzantine Empire in 1040/1041 (led by Petur Delian) and in 1072/1073 (led by Georgi Voitekh and Constantine Bodin), i.e. on the threshold between the 11th and the 12th century, and, in particular, before the well-known year of 1092. As has become clear, in these particular times and generally in the years between the 1060s/1070s and 1200, a number of apocalyptic texts emerged in the Bulgarian territories, mainly such ones that associated the prophecies with the names of Isaiah and Daniel. These texts as a rule presented the lands of the Bulgarians as the *center* of the Christian Kingdom which at that time was being plundered by various 'barbarian' peoples, called at times 'Vugri', at times 'Pechenegs', and sometimes 'blonde-beards'. One of these texts is the aforementioned *Vision of the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times* (13th century), and the passage of interest reads as follows:

They will come to the river, called "the hidden paradise"; this river flows through the land of Israel, called Mezina Land. There, the rod from the root of Jesse will flourish. And this I will tell you, which will happen in the last times. It is not me who is speaking, but the Holy Spirit ... [...] And lo, a sign is given, not by me, but by the Holy Spirit! When you see the end of the Kingdom in Mezina Land, afterwards no other king shall come from the same origin.¹⁵⁹

158 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 155–156; Petkov 2008, 207–208.

159 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 237–238; Petkov 2008, 528–529.

It is worth noting here again that two of these 'unclean peoples' were described as invading the Bulgarian lands namely from the—once again—paradigmatic north direction, namely the Magyars and the Pechenegs. In these apocalyptic texts, these peoples are often also denoted by terms such as 'Ishmaelites' or 'unclean peoples' who have no laws. Their 'lawlessness', however, could also mean something else: a disaster or punishment for committed sins, for example. The latter interpretation is based on the psalms (Ps. 69:27: "Add to them punishment upon punishment; may they have no acquittal from you") and is shared by such serious authority figures from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages like St. Anthony the Great and Isidorus.¹⁶⁰

As regards the 'blonde-beards', it has been clarified above that this name was initially a reference to the Rus' (Varangians) from the 9th–10th centuries, which were modeled in this way by the Byzantine authors of the same time period. During the 11th century, however, this name acquired a new meaning, also in the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts: it denoted people who had come from a western/southwestern direction and, more precisely, the Normans that at that time inhabited present-day Italy.

But was it possible that the Danube Bulgarians had encountered actual Rus' also after the unfortunate for Bulgaria years from 968 to 970? Here, I shall briefly note the intriguing fact of a Rus' invasion (from Kievan Rus') south of the Danube, near the city of Drustur/Dorostorum (present-day Silistra in Bulgaria) that occurred in 1116. However, it can hardly be considered deserving of the attention of the Bulgarian anonymous authors of apocalyptic writings, so as to be reflected in their texts, either under the name of 'Ishmaelites', or under that of 'blonde-beards'. In view of this invasion, I would like to clarify that it was actually a mere 'link' in the overall policy of the pacification of Kievan Rus' southern borders that was pursued by Vladimir Monomakh (1113–1125) and directed against the Pechenegs, Torks and the so-called Berendei from the Black Sea region. This activation of the Rus' southwards resulted in the first campaign led by Vladimir Monomakh's brother-in-law, Leon, who, after having managed to seize several Danubian towns, fell dead (August 1116) at Drustur from the hands of mercenaries serving Alexios I Komnenos. The Rus'ian interest did not end with this failure, since almost immediately thereafter Vladimir Monomakh again sent Ivan Voitishich to the Danube, together "with *posadniks* on the Danube", but this time the fortress of Drustur withstood the Rus'ian attacks. Quite expectedly, the Byzantines made every effort

160 Klimentko 2004, 201.

to prevent the Rus' from permanently settling in the Danube delta, and especially south of the river.¹⁶¹

It is obvious, therefore, that during the decades between the 1040s, in general, and 1200, the *arch-evil* before the Second Coming for both the Byzantines and the Bulgarians was expected to invade the Christian Empire either from the north or from the west. A certain fluidity and a kind of uncertainty can be seen regarding the direction from which the *evil* was expected to invade the Holy Land, i.e. the center of Christendom. The Magyars and the Pechenegs ideally suited the scheme with the steppe peoples from the North, known as Gog and Magog. This, however, could not be applied to the Normans, who during the 11th century invaded the Byzantine Empire, i.e. the lands of the Southwestern Balkans that at the time were inhabited predominantly by Bulgarians, from the west. Moreover, these Normans were neither pagans, not Muslims, but professed the Christian faith!

Let us now draw some additional conclusions from the above-said. For the Bulgarians in general, the peak moments in the process of perceiving the *arch-enemy* before the Second Coming were during the 10th century (personified by the Magyars/Ugrians as pagans coming from the north), and during the 11th century (personified by the Pechenegs and the so-called 'blonde-beards'). In view of these findings, it seems quite surprising, especially against the backdrop of the Rus'ian chronicles of the 11th–12th centuries, that the Bulgarian sources prior to the Fourth Crusade do not contain any notion of the Cumans as the *arch-enemy*, although these same Cumans were located north of the Bulgarians, beyond the Danube, and they were also pagans, or in other words, they fit perfectly into the apocalyptic schemes. Whether this was also due to the fact that a large number of these same Cumans were assimilated rather quickly in Bulgaria and even managed to lay the foundations of entire royal dynasties during the 13th–14th centuries, including the Terterids and the Shishmanids, shall remain an open question that will not be answered here.

The first Cuman attacks south of the Danube River were carried out during the reign of basileus Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078), i.e. in the late 1070s, and the second phase began at the start of the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118). During this period, the Cuman invasions were strictly connected to the large-scale Pecheneg offensive on the Balkan Peninsula, which was carried out during the 1080s.¹⁶² This is why the assertion of V. Tăpkova-Zaimova

161 See Kniaz'kii 2003, 67–68, citing specific Rus'ian chronicles; on the Rus' interest in the Lower Danube region mainly during the period between the 10th–13th centuries, see Konovalova, Perkhavko 2000.

162 See Stoianov 2005, 6–9.

and A. Miltenova—that in the Old-Bulgarian versions of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara's *Apocalypse* and “in the version from the second half of the 11th century” in particular, the name ‘Ishmaelites’ was used to denote “Uzes, Cumans and other Turkic tribes that plundered the Bulgarian lands”,¹⁶³ invading them in the second half of the 11th century—needs some clarification. The only nomadic tribes that appeared in the historical apocalyptic literature under the name ‘Ishmaelites’ during the above-mentioned period are the Ugrians/Magyars and the Pechenegs, but not the Cumans. And this means that the Byzantine and Bulgarian sources from the time period contain accounts of the Cuman invasions in Southeastern Europe, but it also means that the unknown Bulgarian authors of the apocalyptic texts did not ‘recall’ the Cumans as the invaders of the Bulgarian Holy Land! At the same time the Ugrians were the people that can be found in the Bulgarian written sources and later in folklore (where they were called *cherno vugre*, literally, “black *Vugri*”). Therefore, in view of the above-said and contrary to the Russian *case*, for the Bulgarians the Cumans never became the *arch*-enemy and the apocalyptic sign of the coming of Antichrist, even though they were nomads and the time inhabited the lands north of the Danube River.

3.3 *Beginning and End of Tsardom: Bulgarian ‘Responses’ to the Expectation of the End of Times*

3.3.1 *The Topos of the ‘First Tsar’: ‘Tsar Slav’ and/or ‘Ispor Tsar’, or on the Legitimization of the Beginning of the Bulgarian Tsardom*

The well-known motif of the first Bulgarian Tsar Slav from the historical apocalyptic apocryph *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah of How an Angel Brought Him to the Seventh Heaven*, also called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, has been the object of a number of studies with regard to the interpretation of said expression.¹⁶⁴ Before attempting to answer the following questions, I would like to briefly highlight several important starting points.

First of all, what is the role of the prophet Isaiah, according to the Bulgarian anonymous scribe? In the Bulgarian *case*, the prophet Isaiah has been recognized by one of the most recent researchers of this document, Ivan Biliarsky, as the New Moses, who with his staff (*sic!*) directed the *new* God-chosen people,

163 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 21.

164 Ivanov 1925; Venedikov 1983; Kaimakamova 2004, 417–441; Kaimakamova 2006, 80; Biliarsky 2011; Biliarsky 2013.

the Bulgarians, towards the Promised Land.¹⁶⁵ According to Biliarsky, Land of Karvuna (*Karvunska zemia*, present-day Dobrudzha) in the *Tale*, which was populated by God's commandment with the help of Isaiah, is the imaginary copy of the Promised Land. This is confirmed numerous times in the text itself and by its geographical and topographical realia, both real and imaginary (mainly several emblematic rivers and the Black Sea, seen through the prism of the archetypal Jordan River and the Red Sea).¹⁶⁶ It is this Land of Karvuna, "deserted by the Hellenes" a hundred and thirty years earlier that the "first tsar" among Bulgarians, Slav, settled in.

It is usually assumed that the expression 'Tsar Slav' is a way to mark the Slavic ethnonym or the so-called second major component in the ethnogenesis of the medieval Bulgarian nationality.¹⁶⁷ There are, however, such scholars, like Sergei A. Ivanov, who have stated two decades ago that there was no sign of a "common Slavic self-awareness" in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*.¹⁶⁸ Sergei A. Ivanov also maintains that Tsar Slav is a mythical figure; he is not only absent from other, more reliable sources, but the years of this rule, 119 in number, are far too many for any actual medieval ruler: *cf.* "The telling name of the mythical Tsar Slav"; "... mythical, as Slav himself".¹⁶⁹ A number of other scholars also agree with Ivanov's stance. For example, Todor Mollov talks about Slav and Ispor from the same source as "sacred forekings", emphasizing the extraordinary longevity of their reigns, 119 and 172 years, respectively.¹⁷⁰

What are the main actions that denote the figure of Tsar Slav in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*? Also, could they actually suggest other possible interpretations of this expression, which would be no less adequate in view of the medieval way of thinking and especially that of the learned people of the times? In short, the source reveals that this tsar was placed by the prophet Isaiah on God's command in "the Land of Karvuna, called Bulgarian Land", i.e. Dobrudzha, since the latter had been deserted "by Romans and Hellenes" a hundred and thirty years earlier (the text contains the exact phrase "deserted by Hellenes a hundred and thirty years ago"—*Author's note*). The prophet then populated the land with "many people from the Danube to the sea", making "one of them a tsar; and his name was Slav". This tsar "populated regions and

165 Biliarsky 2011, 71.

166 See Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 199.

167 See Venedikov 1983, 44, 46; Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 203 n. 8; Mollov 1997, 34, 42; Kaimakamova 1990, 125; Kaimakamova 2006, 80.

168 Ivanov 1991, 134 ff.; the same theory is also shared by Polyviannyi 2000, 120.

169 Ivanov 2009, 28–29.

170 Mollov 1997, 36; see also Biliarsky 2011, 88–89, 200–202; Biliarsky 2013, 102–103, 232–234.

cities”, and his people “were pagans for some time”. It was Slav who “built a hundred mounds in the Bulgarian land” and that is how he got the name “the Hundred-Mound Tsar”. Slav was also presented as “the first tsar of the Bulgarian land”, and this reign as “years of abundance”.¹⁷¹

As any first ruler, Tsar Slav is characterized according to the well-known features of the ‘first tsar’: via the idea of plentitude, and the settlement of his people in urban spaces, which have not been created by him (as opposed to several other Bulgarian rulers referred to as builders of cities in the same source!), but have obviously been abandoned by their former inhabitants in the so-called Land of Karvuna. It is clear that his actions were modeled according to the archetypal expectations regarding the actions of the ‘first king’.

As has long been noted in literature, Tsar Slav is also marked by the paganism of “his people” and by the “hundred mounds.” Jordan Ivanov points out the area north of Dobrudzha on the Prut River, where there was a site also called “a hundred mounds”. The same author also mentions an interesting fact given by John Skylitzes in connection with his account of a Pecheneg invasion in the mid-11th century: namely, that in the northeastern part of present-day Bulgaria, a legend existed about a place/region called “a hundred mounds/hills”.¹⁷² Such a context would also allow us to think in the direction of ancient archetypal ideas which are not directly related to Christianity or apocalypticism. It refers to the special meaning of the mound/burial hill of kings in ancient times, especially in Eurasia: thought to be the centerpiece of a regulated world in which chaos does not exist; it was located by presumption at the “center of the world,” and so—according to Mircea Eliade and his followers—in the same plane with the sacred mountain, the royal palace or temple, or with the capital of the ruler.¹⁷³ Behind the royal mounds/burial hills we can clearly see the visualization of that phenomenon-and-image we call *Axis Mundi*, an “axis of the world/world axis” that seems to pierce the *center* of the Earth and gives a vertical dimension to the transcendental impulse of the individual man, but also his *own* collective, his *own* community. The pagan past, along with the hundred mounds in the abovesaid source clearly point towards the image of Tsar Slav as a personification of ‘royal glory’ (Bulg. *tsarska slava*) *par excellence*, hence the idea of the legitimacy—by God’s command—of that which happened in the Land of Karvuna, deserted by the Hellenes.

171 Ivanov 1925, 281–282; Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 195—the original, 199—the modern Bulgarian translation; Petkov 2008, 195.

172 Ivanov 1925, 282, n. 1; see Georgiev 2006, 54–68; Shchavelev 2007, 151–152.

173 On these ‘axes’ and ‘centers’, see Eliade 1995, 408–429; Eliade 1997, 145–174.

Aleksei Shchhavelev suggests that the phrase “a hundred mounds”, repeated no less than three times in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* regarding Tsar Slav, could contain the coded notion of “the creation of hillforts or shrines” and not so much “burial connotations”. Shchhavelev also believes that “tsar of a hundred mounds” designates “the limits of the authority of the first *kniaz* or prince, i.e. it symbolizes the spread of Slav’s power over the lands where these *loci* (the above-mentioned hillforts and shrines—*Author’s note*) were situated”.¹⁷⁴ Pavel Georgiev is more inclined to view the hundred mounds as an embodiment of the ‘city/fortification’ concept¹⁷⁵—a theory that is also supported by Ivan Biliarsky.¹⁷⁶

If this initial approach is correct, then the passages referring to Slav would have to contain a lot of ancient *topoi* and mental attitudes that are not strictly Christian, but have penetrated into this typically apocalyptic, i.e. Christian, text.

Secondly, the analysis in this case would have to focus not so much and not exclusively on the notion of Slavdom, visible, as is usually thought, in the expression ‘Tsar Slav’, but also on other possible messages to the addressee of this type of texts. It seems to me that the addressee in this case is obvious: after 1018, this type of texts were read by learned monks and people knowledgeable in the Holy Scripture, especially those who were familiar with the anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the 11th century, and the ideas around the so-called Last Kingdom/Last King, which were expected to have a special role before the *End of Times*. Therefore, concepts such as ‘(royal) glory’, ‘chosen people’, ‘chosen kingdom’ and the like, initially containing ideas regarding the legitimacy of kingship and ‘God’s people’, can be expected with great certainty to appear, in coded or plain form, just in such apocalyptic texts, in some of their passages or phrases.

Before attempting to defend the above thesis, let me briefly present the latest interpretations of the expression ‘Tsar Slav’. Drawing on the idea that Slav’s title (*sic*), “Hundred-Mound Tsar”, might have denoted the authority of the latter over the lands of the Slavic clans (100 clearly “was a conventional, ‘significant’ number”), to whom these hillforts or familial shrine-mounds belonged, Aleksei Shchhavelev recently suggested two possible readings of the expression ‘Tsar Slav’. According to him, the first possibility is the well-known hero eponym, similar to the East Slavic Radim and Viatko, the Czech “father of Czech” and the like, since the Slavs deemed it especially important to preserve “the

174 Shchhavelev 2007, 152.

175 Georgiev 2006, 55, 60.

176 Biliarsky 2011, 48, 201.

historical memory of their common self-designation and of the first prince with an eponymous name” under the conditions firstly of the Turkic (*sic*) rule, and then of the Byzantine one. This Shchhavelev sees, based on a typological comparison, as a common feature among the Eastern Slovenians and the Slovaks, who proved to be close to the “alien environment”, which stimulated them to preserve their original self-designation.¹⁷⁷ Shchhavelev associates the second possible interpretation with the concept of glory (Bulg. *slava*), pointing out that the base, *-slav*, is one of the most widespread parts of the Slavic two-part princely names and that it may have even existed “also as a separate name”.¹⁷⁸

In Bulgaria, the topic of Tsar Slav and the ‘hundred mounds’ was most recently researched by Ivan Biliarsky. He initially agrees that the name Slav is “an eponym of the Slavic tribe, presented from a purely mythological point of view”,¹⁷⁹ before elaborating his view: “In this sense, I cannot agree that he (Slav—*Author’s note*) symbolizes the Slavic principle in the formation of the Bulgarian nationality”, but rather, we should “seek the meaning of Tsar Slav not in some ethnic construction, but in authority’s ideological position for identity and its religious legitimacy”. In the scholar’s words, the above-mentioned phrases and fragments clearly emphasize the role of Prophet Isaiah in Slav’s positioning as ruler of the Land of Karvuna, thus unveiling the concept of the Bulgarians (and their first tsar in his role as the exponent of the Bulgarians) as a new ‘chosen people’—all actions revealing God’s purpose.¹⁸⁰

For Biliarsky, however, the unknown Bulgarian medieval author of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* did not have the intention to “conceal” within the name of (Tsar) Slav the ancient settlement of Slavs in this part of Southeastern Europe during the 6th century, but, rather, “to present the land, the people and its ruler in the paradigm of the biblical tradition, and in this sense the image of Tsar Slav is an accurate step precisely in that direction”.¹⁸¹

Some time ago, Ivan Duichev also took special note of the eponym ‘Slav’, while also paying attention to the significant fact that his mounds were human-made, i.e. they were not natural phenomena.¹⁸² For that matter, four such artificial mounds, almost forming a square and dating from the age of ‘pagan’

177 Shchhavelev 2007, 152–154.

178 Shchhavelev 2007, 153, and the literature, mentioned in n. 224 and 225; see such male first names as Svetoslav, Miroslav, Vladislav, Břetislav, etc., which were widespread in the Slavic world in the Middle Ages.

179 Biliarsky 2011, 88–90.

180 Biliarsky 2011, 200–201.

181 Biliarsky 2011, 201–203.

182 Duichev 1972, 126; see also Biliarsky 2011, 201.

Bulgaria, have been found near Pliska (Kabiiuk Hill). They have, however, been associated by their researchers with the funeral rites of the Bulgars, which—based on other sources and artifacts from the time period in question—is a fair enough assumption.¹⁸³ In view of the specifics of this type of texts, however, it seems quite unlikely that the anonymous scribe of the historical-apocryphal work in question was especially concerned with the ethnic origins of the people who left the mounds near Pliska in the first half of the 9th century.

We cannot disagree with the above-noted theory that in this type of medieval works, the biblical archetypes and *topoi* from the Old Testament constituted the basis and starting point for every Christian author of such apocalyptic texts. We should nevertheless check whether such ‘hundred hills’ or ‘hundred mounds’ exist in the Bible (e.g., in *Exodus*), and especially in texts related to the prophets Isaiah and Daniel, whose prophecies were generally “immutable and guiding truths” for the medieval Christian apocalyptic writers.

Another possibility for analysis is to focus on the well-known fact of the mound built on orders of Kanasybigi Omurtag (814–831) (*sic*), which was situated in the *middle* (!) between his old and new *palace/aul* on the Danube River (!) and was ‘all-glorious’ (Bulg. *vseslavna*) (*sic!*).¹⁸⁴ At the end of the inscription on a stone column containing the above-mentioned information, a wish for Khan Omurtag’s longevity can also be found, being, quite expectantly, “for a hundred years”. These passages from the so-called Turnovo inscription of Omurtag clearly reflect the direct connection between the mound and the palaces. It is no coincidence that it was erected midway between the two palaces, thus itself becoming a *center* of the un-chaotic space, organized “in a royal, i.e. legitimate”—in terms of transcendence—manner. And this, in truth, was the task and duty of every ‘tsar’ in pre-modern times: to *organize* the initial chaos and to give it clear spatial (and temporal) coordinates, which necessarily included the idea of the ‘center’ and the ‘middle’. The latter idea is clearly present, and has been cited often precisely in historical apocalyptic texts! It is with such and similar acts that the *own* space has been marked in a number of cultures of the pre-modern world, as has been long-known in academic circles. At the same time, the very designation in the text of the inscription and the palaces of Omurtag, as well as the mound, as “all-glorious” suggests their perception as typical *Axis mundi*-markers and *loci* in the minds of the Bulgar pre-Christian elite. Naturally, there can be no talk of any direct influences between the information inscribed on the above-said column and the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*. Rather, this is a case of common mental attitudes and

183 See Rashev, Stanilov, Stoichev 2014.

184 Beshevliev 1992, 207–208, No. 56.

clichés, which were quite typical for pre-modern times and especially for the Middle Ages, and have been often found as relics in folklore.

In connection with the interpretation of Tsar Slav, I feel it necessary to highlight two additional opinions, which complement each other and suggest some finer aspects of this naming. They belong to Todor Mollov and Dmitrii Polyviannyi. The first author notes the wish of the Kievan prince Sviatoslav, who had plundered Bulgaria at the end of the reign of St. Tsar Petur of Bulgaria († 970), to have as a 'center' of his lands the Bulgarian city of Preslavets on the Danube (the so-called Little Preslavets—*Author's note*).¹⁸⁵ The reception of the 'glory', i.e. the royal power according to the mentality of the times, could be legitimately done only "in the center of one's *own* land/kingdom"!

In his turn, Dmitrii Polyviannyi interprets the name of the city of Preslav through the idiom 'reception of glory', i.e. the allusion is of a place which would be suitable for the (etymologically Slavic) 'reception of glory' (*preiati slavu*, in Old Bulgarian/Old Church Slavonic), from which such names as 'glorified city' (Bulg. *preslaven grad*), i.e. capital (=center) can be traced. In his view, the expression 'reception of glory' is a direct "verbal expression of the idea of *translatio imperii*".¹⁸⁶

The latter observations are quite close to the communicative level of 'Tsar Slav', which I feel to be the most adequate interpretation in view of ideas such as that of the 'chosen kingdom' and the 'chosen people', led by a king who is God's chosen one by presumption and precisely because of this, since deepest antiquity, has been associated with the sky, fire and the sun and hence, with light and glory. Glory is considered to be a transcendental emanation of light in a number of ancient cultures in Eurasia. It can be found in such concepts as the ancient Iranian *hvarena/hvarnah* (cf. the Alanian *farn*), as well as the newer Turkic *qut*,¹⁸⁷ and also in the Slavic *slava*, which are nothing more than verbal coding of the notion of a legitimate, God-sanctioned power. Hence the origins of such concepts as "goodness" (Bulg. *blago*) and (especially) "good fortune/fate", which was attributed to kings precisely due to their election/chosenness by God. It is no coincidence that these kings are identified by epithets like "prominent", "glorious", etc., i.e. with qualities inherent to legitimate rulers. Hence the visualization of the *glory* by halos above the heads of kings (best seen in Eastern Orthodoxy), as well as above the heads

185 Mollov 1997, 107–108: "... in Preslavets on the Danube, as it is *the middle of my land*" ("... v Pereiaslavtsi na Dunai, iako zhe to est' *sereda zemli moi*") (*Italics mine—Author's note*).

186 Polyviannyi 2000, 65, 79–81.

187 Golden 1992, 240; Stepanov 2001, 1–19, with the literature cited there.

of saintly figures in Christianity, but also in Buddhism.¹⁸⁸ These and similar etymologisms and symbolic interpretations bring us closer to the logical idea, proposed by Elena Stateva (and shared in a private conversation), according to whom the further evolution of the above-said ancient notions of chosenness and divine enlightenment can be found in such a popular Christian concept as ‘king of glory’ (*tsar slavy* in Old Bulgarian).

Given that the expression ‘Tsar Slav’ occurs in a prophecy attributed to Isaiah, we can easily assume that there are also allusions here with a specific reference in Isaiah’s archetypal prophecy in the Old Testament that was naturally directed towards the first ‘chosen people’, the Jews. The passage in question reads as follows:

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”.

Is. 6:1–3

The whole passage (Is. 6:1–12) is incidentally read during the second Thursday of Lent. In addition, ‘Lord’s glory’ and its connection to the seraphim can also be found in a vision of another prophet that was important for the Jews, Ezekiel.¹⁸⁹ The first chapter of Ezekiel is usually read during service on Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday.

Therefore, the ‘allusion’ to this concept in the ‘Tsar Slav’-expression, which is in fact an inversion of the two words in the aforementioned *tsar slavy*, ‘king of glory’, is easily explained in view of the genre specifics of historical apocalypticism, where this expression appears.

Of special importance is also another expression, namely, “tsar by the name of Gagan”, which can again be found in the same text of Isaiah’s prophecy.¹⁹⁰ As has already become clear, this ruler has long since been identified as Petur Delian, the leader of the Bulgarian uprising against the Byzantines in 1040/1041. Here, we see a duplication of the title, i.e. he is both ‘khagan’ and ‘tsar’, a sort of

¹⁸⁸ For further details, see Dvornik 1966, 84–101, 114, 124–129.

¹⁸⁹ See Ez. 1:1–28; 2:1, and more specifically 1:27 and 2:1, as well as Ez. 10:4.

¹⁹⁰ Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 198—for the Old Bulgarian original, 202—for the modern Bulgarian translation; Petkov 2008, 207–208.

double legitimacy.¹⁹¹ The comparison with the expression 'Tsar Slav' is simply obligatory in this case, even more so in view of the fact that the mentioned phrases are found in the same written source. The latter is again a sort of duplication, since the tsar has *glory* by presumption! Could this be an artistic device on the part of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle's* author? By doubling the names-and-titles, did he intend to give a dual legitimacy to the authority, and in doing so, expected his message to gain more weight? If the latter is true, it is likely that these and similar expressions contain different layers, messages and shades of meaning, which are yet to receive their most adequate possible reading. And another thing. Since the apocalyptic texts have been mostly compiled by ordinary monks from regional spiritual and literary centers, and not by erudite and cultivated theologians working in capital centers, they often contain not only motifs and allusions drawn from the Holy Scripture, but also 'revived' old mental matrices (so-called folklore relics). Such centers usually did not work on 'royal orders'. This was especially true regarding the apocalyptic texts in Bulgaria from the times of Byzantine rule. This is why with regard to these texts, it will prove difficult in some cases to distinguish in detail the exact parts where the anonymous authors adhered to the archetypal apocalyptic and eschatological texts and *passages/topoi* from the Bible, and where they unconsciously 'revived' ancient notions that most often had originated from the various Euro-Asian mythological matrices.

The same written document, however, also contains another 'tsar' among the Bulgarians, again related to the primordially and known by the name of Ispor. It has long been established in scientific circles that this Ispor is none other than the Bulgar ruler Asparukh, the founder of Danube Bulgaria and the son of Kubrat, the ruler of 'Old Great Bulgaria'.¹⁹² Ispor/Asparukh follows immediately after Tsar Slav in this singular genealogy of the earliest kingship in Bulgaria.

The passage of Asparukh's Bulgars south of the Danube River, symbolically loaded with *Roman imperial* and *Christian* heritage, has earned a special place in the *Tale*. In connection with this, the well-known passage from the so-called *Name List* of the Bulgar rulers is usually cited, since it basically contains the same idea: of the passage/crossing of a *boundary* in order to achieve a *new status* (a kind of initiation), in a *new civilization space*. A lot has been written and said on this topic by various authors, which is why I will restrict myself here to only point out the following: Ivan Biliarsky is the scholar who has done

191 Stepanov 2005, 182–199; Stepanov 2008b, 363–377.

192 See the passage in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 199–200, translated into modern Bulgarian; Petkov 2008, 195.

an in-depth research of the Old Testament passages that mention head shaving/trimming as an important sign of a given vow/promise.¹⁹³

Some perceptions and images deserve to be studied in more detail here, in a parallel interpretation of important passages from the two texts. A number of authors, following Josef Marquart, Géza Fehér, Omeljan Pritsak, Mosko Moskov, to name but a few well-known names in the historiography of this subject from the past century, traditionally tend to regard the founder of the Bulgarian ‘tsarship’, i.e. the first ruler mentioned in the *Name List*, Avitokhol, as the well-known Hunnic ruler, Attila. This claim, however, has been disputed over the past two decades in a number of studies, both by Petur Dobrev,¹⁹⁴ and by the author of this book.¹⁹⁵ The ‘topography’ of the text of the so-called *Name List* in *Letopisets ellinskii i rimskii*, immediately following the *Fourth Book of Kings*, suggests that the anonymous author was attempting to achieve another impression. Namely, that kingship among Bulgarians did not originate from Attila, but by “God’s command”, since the Bulgarians were—according to their designated place in the above-mentioned book from the Old Testament (after the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar)—descendants of ancient Israel, i.e. the new ‘chosen people’.

Here, I shall summarize my view on the above issue. Firstly, the overlapping of these two figures is a theory that cannot be confirmed by way of etymology (much closer to Avitokhol is, for example, Abimelech, or the derivatives from *avva*, a finding that has been addressed in the past). Nor can it be confirmed by chronological analysis, since Attila was a real person who lived in the first half of the 5th century, while the origins of the Bulgarian ‘tsardom’/power were dated in the *Name List* to the mid-2nd century AD. Secondly, if the number 300 next to the name/time period of Avitokhol is indeed a multiple of the 12-year cycle in the calendar of steppe Eurasia, as per the interpretation of Ivan Biliarsky, then what kind of *divisibility* is embedded in the other number: the 150 years next to the name/time period of Irnik (and in one of the manuscripts containing the *Name List*, the number 150 is replaced by 108 years)?

It seems to me that it is worth repeating here once more one of my previously expressed opinions: that behind these 150 and 300 years is the notion of the pre-modern people (both in the ancient Iranian-speaking world and in the Near East, and even in the Christian Middle Ages and, more specifically, in the works of St. Augustine) about the *generation*, perceived as a duration of

193 Biliarsky 2011, 81–83, 211–222.

194 See, for instance, Dobrev 1991; Dobrev 1994; Dobrev 1995; cf. Shervashidze 1989, 79–81.

195 See Stepanov 1999; Stepanov 2008a, 35–46; Stepanov 2010–2011, 241–257.

30 years.¹⁹⁶ If the latter is true, then the meaning here would be quite different: these 300 and 150 years, respectively, would actually denote 10 (the 'Avitokhol'-period) and, respectively, 5 (the 'Irnik'-period) generations time, before the real, preserved in memory, rulers of Kubrat's Bulgaria and its extension along the Danube at the end of the 7th century began to appear in the *Name List*. Thus, the mythical ancestor of the Bulgars can hardly be identified as the real historical figure of Attila, and, as is usually the case in similar instances also in other regions of early medieval Europe, he is probably a divine character: a real deity/goddess, or a cultural hero. Ivan Venedikov,¹⁹⁷ for instance, has also long been leaning towards such an interpretation, although the author of the present book cannot share a number of his views, since they thoroughly ignore the other main 'source' in the compiling of such texts, i.e. the Old and New Testaments.

In the following paragraphs, I will try, on the basis of a comparative analysis with data from other regions of medieval Europe, to justify in greater detail the interdependence between a deity/goddess giving life to a 'first king'. This ancient notion is, in fact, the most common basis of almost every royal genealogy. Our analysis begins from a specific quote from the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*: "And then after him [Slav] another tsar was found in the Bulgarian land, a *detishte*, carried in a basket for three years; he was given the name Tsar Ispor".¹⁹⁸ Some scholars prefer this translation, "in a basket", instead of the other one, "in a cow".¹⁹⁹

But which one of the two translations should we choose as the more adequate one? I think it would be best to start with a look at both approaches in the search of a paradigmatic image, the 'matrix' of which served to create the notion of the miraculously born Ispor. The first approach views "in a basket" as the correct translation and focuses on several moments: 1) a similar, as if by God's will, survival of abandoned children can be found across the Near East, in a number of legends from ancient times, including those about Moses, Sargon, the Achaemenid Cyrus, etc.²⁰⁰ Romulus and Remus are also foundlings, as are other figures, geographically connected to Europe; 2) at the same time, the authors also highlight the specifics of the genre where this motif appears: this is a historical apocalyptic text and as such it should by presumption

196 See Stepanov 1999.

197 Venedikov 1983; Venedikov 1995.

198 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 199; Petkov 2008, 195.

199 Venedikov 1983, 47; Venedikov 1995, 245; for a more varied and nuanced opinion, see Biliarsky 2011, 141; for a completely different view, see Georgiev 2005, 77–82, esp. 77–78.

200 For further details, see Venedikov 1983, 47–49; Ivanov 2009, 28; Biliarsky 2011, 141–143, 162, 223–231.

follow similar texts and perceptions from the Holy Scripture (for example, the great number of years of Aspharukh's rule, 172, which are reminiscent of the biblical archetype in the Old Testament; or pointing "with a staff" the way for the new chosen people of God, the Bulgarians,²⁰¹ who were meant to settle in the above-mentioned Land of Karvuna, deserted by the Hellenes 130 years earlier. The meaning of the empty space, the 'deserted land' in this case, could be sought in the concept of the 'realm of chaos' and the trial,²⁰² but at the same time it can also be perceived as the future Bulgarian Promised Land.²⁰³ It is also worth taking into account the focus on the lexeme *detishte*, "a child large for its age", which can also be found in other similar, though later texts,²⁰⁴ and also in Bulgarian folklore and the heroic epic in particular.²⁰⁵ Thus, ultimately, appears the notion of 'Tsar Ispor' as a 'young *bogatyr*' in the role of a 'cultural hero', overcoming the 'desert' with his people and consequently making it into a civilized, space of 'his own'.²⁰⁶

The other approach draws attention to the fact that there are numerous examples in mythology of the Great Mother Goddess incarnated as various animals. Moreover, very often in the most ancient postdiluvian centers of civilization in Euro-Asia, during the late Neolithic Age and also later, the goddess is represented as a cow (and, respectively, as a counterpoint to the male principle, embodied in her husband, the bull). According to the traditions of the ancient mythologies, the origin of kingship is always divine, being the result of the merging of the male and female sacred principles.²⁰⁷ And since the apocalyptic stories and legends have their roots in the Near East, it seems that the cow—as an incarnation of the Great Goddess—is the most suitable creature for the role of the 'mother' of Ispor/Asparukh. As far as I know, the Russian scholars Sergej Ivanov and Anatolii Turilov consider both translations to be possible.²⁰⁸ Some Bulgarian authors, including Todor Mollov and Ivan Biliarsky, find "in a cow" to be the more adequate translation, although Ivan

201 Ivanov 1989, 73; Mollov 1997, 31–32 and n. 8.

202 According to the scheme of Mircea Eliade; see also Badalanova-Pokrovskaia 1990, 141.

203 This opinion is also shared by Biliarsky 2011; Biliarsky 2013.

204 Starobulgarska eskhatologiia 1993, 111: "Prozrenie na prorok Daniil za poslednite vremena i za Antikhrista".

205 Venedikov 1983, 70; Badalanova-Pokrovskaia 1990, 142.

206 Badalanova-Pokrovskaia 1990, 142.

207 Interesting observations in this regard, concerning the Khazars, related to the Bulgars, can be found in Zhivkov 2009, 21–31, and Zhivkov 2013, 77–79, 101–102, 109–110, 114–126.

208 Ivanov 1989, 72; Turilov 1995, 2–39; Ivanov 2009, 28 and n. 61; see Ivanov 1991, 132.

Biliarsky is more inclined to see in this phrase the coded motif of the 'floating child', i.e. the Moses paradigm, incorporated into a Bulgarian environment.²⁰⁹

Mollov views the familiar legend of the doe and the Huns, known from the works of Eunapius, Sozomen, Procopius of Caesarea and others, in its relation to the migration rituals, similar to the Italic 'sacred spring' (*Ver Sacrum*), i.e. to the Ephebic group. He emphasizes the fact that in both the mythologema 'magic childhood', and in these ritual migrations, "the patron of the Ephebic groups is the Great Mother Goddess in her role of progenitrix"; this would explain her appearance in the form of a 'horned mother', i.e. a cow and/or a doe.²¹⁰

On his part, Stefan Iordanov rightly notes that in ancient times, the role of the cow during migrations was perceived as identical to that of the doe.²¹¹

Bull horns could be found in depictions of deities among the Sumerians; this practice continued among the Babylonians and Hittites who came after them, and also in Egypt. The ancient Egyptian goddesses Hathor and Isis, as well as the Mesopotamian Ishtar, were all depicted as half-women and half-cows, and Hathor in particular was also presented as the wife of the bull Apis. In ancient Greece, Hera and Io were also associated with the cow, as was the Semitic goddess Astarte. Again in Egyptian mythology, the 'celestial cow' was perceived as the mother of the sun, i.e. there, the cow became the personification of the sky. In short, many similar examples can be found in the Near East, which means that they should not be initially rejected in the interpretation process.²¹²

Ariel Golan, for example, accentuates the fact that in the Near East not only gods, but also kings were depicted with bull horns, with the crescent moon often likened to a horn.²¹³ It is precisely in historical apocalypticism that kingship is often associated with a 'horn' (here, I will again refer to the name given to Alexander the Great in Persian-Arabic literature, namely, "the Two-Horned" (*Zu'l-karnain/Dhu'l-karnain*). Another old practice in ancient times was the perception of the royal crown as the union of the sun and the moon, i.e. they were seen as 'horns', and the best example of this are the crenellated crowns of the Sassanid shahinshahs. Here, I shall only mention one such example, which again stems from the historical apocalyptic literature. The excerpt can

209 For further details on this paradigm, see Biliarsky 2011, 141, 147–152, 154–159, 163, 208, 223–225, 228–229, 231.

210 Mollov 1997, 34–35 and n. 17.

211 Iordanov 1996, 25, 33.

212 See Golan 1993, 41, 53–54, 57.

213 See also Mify 1981, 200: the 'celestial cow' as the mother of the sun; see also Borgoiakov 1976, 55–59.

be found in the so-called *Razumnik-Ukaz* (dated to around the 13th century) and reads as follows:

In place of the twelve apostles there are twelve horns (sic!),
 crowned on royal thrones.
 The place of St. Peter is the Frankish throne;
 the place of St. Paul is the Greek throne;
 the place of St. Luke is the Armenian throne;
 [...] the place of St. John is the Serbian throne;
 [...] the place of St. Thomas is the Nicaean throne ...²¹⁴

Here, I must also mention the well-known passage on the ‘ten horns’ from Daniel’s prophecy (7:7–8, 24), which is again related to kingship; the prophet himself was perhaps one of the most revered among the apocalypticists in the age of Christianity.²¹⁵

The above-mentioned legends can be further supplemented with data from other ethno-cultural areas: for example, in Slavic songs, the crescent moon appears as a man, while the sun is a woman. Also, in some Slavic fables, the moon is called a ‘bull’, and the sun—a ‘cow’. In the *Edda*, the moon and the sun are a man and woman. In some Indo-European languages, variations and fluidity can be found in the perceptions of the *male* and *female*, if seen through the prism of the sun and the moon, even at the lexical level: *cf.* the two Latin names of the moon, *lunus*, masculine, but also *luna*, feminine; *cf.* the Latin for ‘sun’, *sol*, and the French *soleil*, with the same meaning, both of which are masculine in gender, with the Lithuanian *saule* and the German *Sonne*—again meaning ‘sun’, but both are of the feminine gender.²¹⁶

Scholars of Slavic antiquity note that in folk culture, the cow and the bull are traditionally closely connected to water, rain and the clouds; moreover, among the South Slavs and in the Russian North there are legends of cows dwelling in lakes.²¹⁷ In Bulgarian folklore, the sun and the crescent moon are brothers who live in the sky in some versions, while in others the crescent moon has a female image (Bulg. *mesechina*), which is the sister of the sun.²¹⁸ Clearly, in Bulgaria the moon is androgynous by nature, which is why it is also called *Marta* and *Mara mesechina* and seen as the sister of Marko, i.e. the wife of the primordial

214 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 293, 299—in Middle Bulgarian; 305—translated into modern Bulgarian; Petkov 2008, 534.

215 For more details, see Stepanov 2010–2011, 241–257.

216 Golan 1993, 41, 57.

217 Sharapova 2001, 299.

218 Georgieva 1983, 19, 25–26.

male 'light' deity.²¹⁹ One more ancient Bulgarian notion deserves our attention here: that the sun had no father (!) and for this reason it is marked in folklore as a calf or a buffalo-calf.²²⁰ Such perceptions suggest an undeniable connection of the cow and the bull with the Heavens; and from here to deriving the origins of kingship from the Heavens, i.e. from the cow and the bull, is but a single step. It seems very likely that this motif, which is essentially a 'roaming storyline', has been borrowed from the Jews from a Near-Asian ethno-cultural milieu, and that it entered the above-mentioned apocalyptic story from the Old Testament. The Near-Asian milieu, of course, had nothing to do with the places inhabited by the Bulgars of Asparukh before their arrival in Southeastern Europe. Although, on the other hand, due to the spread of literary *topoi*, such and similar motifs often penetrate ethno-cultural boundaries and become an all-typical fund in some Christian legends about the founding 'first king' and about the origins of kingship (*cf.* the Frankish notion about their kingship stemming from ancient Troy, or the early Frankish dynasty of the Merovingians descending from the legendary Merovech. According to a Frankish pagan legend, recorded by Pseudo-Fredegarius, he was born from an encounter between his queen mother and a sea monster).²²¹ It is precisely in this way that the notion of the 'divine chosenness' of a particular Christian people was often justified in the Middle Ages.

And so, whichever of the two interpretations we were to choose as the correct one, be it the one of Ispor's origin as the 'child from the basket' (according to the Moses paradigm and 'matrix'), or the other one, of him being carried/raised/reared 'by a cow', the conclusion remains that the kingship of the Bulgarians who had permanently settled south of the Danube under the rule of Asparukh, was based on divine providence. The conclusion, therefore, can be none other than this: the Bulgarians also had a providential mission as a new 'chosen people' in a new Promised Land.

If we were to accept Ivan Biliarsky's theory on the cosmological time as an essential feature in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle's* text, then we must also agree with the statements I have made above, since it is precisely the cosmological (mythological and cyclical, in essence) time that in general requires the *beginning* to be given by a divine character, which Attila was not. An interesting fact is that Attila himself was viewed by others as a charismatic leader with a mission precisely because he found, according to the legend, the sacred

219 For more details, see Stepanov 2007a, 46–47.

220 Zhivkov 2009, 31; Zhivkov 2013, 125.

221 Ronin 1989, 68.

sword of the Scythians, i.e. he was marked by the Scythian (and later, Alanian) deity of war, perceived in the form of a sword.

Special attention should be paid to the analysis of the *cities* as an essential element of the 'New Israel' doctrine.²²² This motif is persistently present in the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. The archetypes of the *City* are well known in this type of texts: Jerusalem, Rome and, later, Constantinople. The role of such founders is usually taken up by the heroes, in their role as demiurges, as well as the kings-founders of cities; a well-known notion among pre-modern people regarding the city as a simultaneously *sacred* and *orderly* space, governed by *laws*. Such founder kings in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* are the first two, Slav and Ispor (Asparukh), followed by the later rulers Seleukia and Nicephorus, and the final one is the legendary 'Gagan' called 'Odelian', who will be discussed again later on in this book.²²³ All of them are of the 'righteous king' type, in the words of Ivan Biliarsky.²²⁴

3.3.2 *The 'Last Tsar': The 'Revival' of Two Traditional Images in Bulgaria around 1092, or on the Legitimization of the End of the Bulgarian Tsardom*

It has long been accepted in academic circles that the title of the Bulgar ruler before the conversion to Christianity was *khan/khana* and not *khagan*; the latter was used by the so-called imperial peoples of early medieval steppe Eurasia—the Turks, the Avars, and the Khazars. Nevertheless, there are still some scholars today who talk about a Bulgar 'khaganate', instead of a 'Bulgar khanate'.²²⁵ This, of course, is not mistake with regard to the term's meaning, especially considering the period after the beginning of the 9th century, when Bulgaria was *de facto* a khaganate. From a formal point of view, however, it is necessary to point out yet again that neither the local monuments in Bulgaria (the so-called stone inscriptions prior to the late 9th century), nor the Byzantine authors from the 7th–9th centuries have ever mentioned Bulgar khagans. What can be found instead are titles like *kanasybigi* (in inscriptions from the period 822–836) or the well-known Greek title names such as *archon*, *hegemon*, *kyrios*, *archegos*.²²⁶

222 For further details, see Biliarsky 2011, 84–109.

223 See the specific descriptions in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 199–202.

224 Biliarsky 2011, *passim*; Biliarsky 2013.

225 Whittow 1996, 263, 270–272, 279, 285 etc.; Golden 1992, 169.

226 For further details, see Stepanov 1999 and Stepanov 2001, 1–19, with the older literature; Stepanov 2005a, 263–279.

The *khagan* title was attributed to the Bulgars only in some later foreign sources. The so-called *Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja* (*Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*), for instance, mentions the title *khagan*, associating it with the Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael (852–889; † 907),²²⁷ but this monument has been dated to the second half of the 12th century and has clearly been written by a member of the clergy defending the views and interests of the Catholic Bishopric in Bar, established in the late 11th century. It is thus no coincidence that the original text of the document was written in Latin. Its author could hardly have been closely acquainted with Bulgarian history and even less so with the supreme title of the Bulgar rulers until the mid-9th century; it is highly possible that he had trusted the literary tradition of Western Europe, where the title of the Avar *khagan* was well known, and had believed it to be inherent to the Bulgars as well.

This is how the so-called *Salerno Chronicle/Chronicon Salernitanum* (dated to the second half of the 10th century), which contains an important letter from 871, written by Emperor Louis II (855–875) and addressed to the Byzantine basileus Basil I the Macedonian (867–886), presents the situation with the title of the Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael, without actually naming him: “Chaganum vero nos prelatum Avarum, non Gazanorum aut Northmannorum nuncupari repperimus, neque principem Vulgarum, sed regem vel dominum Vulgarum.”²²⁸ According to Louis II, a contemporary of Boris-Michael, the title of *qagan/khagan* was typical only for the Avars, but not for the Khazars or the Normans (i.e. the Rus’), while the title of the Danube Bulgarians was known as *rex* (king) or *dominus* (lord). It seems quite strange that the Chancellery of Louis II was not aware of the fact that the Khazars used the title of *khagan*, but this does not have a direct bearing on the issue at hand. It is more important to note that the Bulgarian ruler was titled according to the Western imperial tradition of the 9th century as a ‘king’ and ‘lord’, and not as a *khagan*. Also noteworthy is the significant fact that the latter title was not typical for the Bulgar sovereigns who ruled over the population in the vast territories along the Volga and Kama Rivers during the 9th–10th centuries. The reply of Emperor Louis II indirectly suggests which rulers were perceived by the Byzantines as *khagans*: those of the Avars and the Khazars, but not the ones in Danube Bulgaria. This

227 See the passage in *Annales Anonymi presbyteri de Dioklea* 1965, 170: “Praerat eis quidam nomine Boris, quem lingua sua ‘cagan’ appellabant, quod in lingua nostra resonat ‘imperator’”.

228 *Chronicon Salernitanum* 1956; for a detailed analysis, see Stepanov 2000, 197–224; Stepanov 2005a, 263–279.

can also be traced in the Byzantine sources of this historical period. This is why the assumption of Stefan Iordanov,²²⁹ which in reality is based, as Iordanov himself points out, on the old view of Georgi Balashev,²³⁰ namely, that the *khagan* title was used by the Danube Bulgars, as evidenced by the above letter of Basil I the Macedonian, should be abandoned, since it is the result of the inaccurate reading and interpretation of the source material.

Also quite problematic is the mention of *khagan* among the Danube Bulgarians in the work of Pseudo-Codinus (10th–11th centuries). It has been cited by Gyula Moravcsik,²³¹ but as it is the only one of its sort, even Stefan Iordanov is cautious when using it,²³² since he is well aware of Gyula Moravcsik's supposition that it could instead refer to the ruler of the Avars. Nonetheless, Iordanov ultimately deems as probable (*sic*) the existence of the above-mentioned title among the Bulgars.²³³ Let us recall that it was in the 10th–11th centuries that the Byzantine historiography permanently established the notion that the Bulgarians were “kindred to the Avars and Khazars”.

In addition to this lead, Stefan Iordanov also cites the account from the so-called *Hungarian Anonymous*,²³⁴ a chronicle that emerged much later than the 9th–10th centuries,²³⁵ where it is also stated that while the Magyars were occupying the lands of present-day Transylvania, then under the rule of the Bulgarians, they were met with the resistance of the so-called Bulgarian *Keanus Magnus* (great kean). For Stefan Iordanov, the latter title corresponds to *khagan*, and not *khan*.²³⁶ At the time when the Magyars “were conquering their new homeland” in present-day Central Europe (the 890s), however, the official title of the Bulgarian rulers was ‘*kniaz*’, as well as ‘*archon*’. A bit later, from 913 onwards—as has been long well known in historiography—Simeon would attempt to attain the title of ‘tsar’ and, respectively, “basileus of the Byzantines and the Bulgarians”, and not *khagan*. The sources do not report about any military actions led personally by the Bulgarian tsar Simeon and his son, Petur, in the Transylvania area in the late 9th century and the first half of the 10th

229 Iordanov 2004, 481.

230 Balashev 1909, 80–81.

231 Moravcsik 1958/11, 333: “the khagan, ruler of the Bulgarians”.

232 Iordanov 2004, 481 and n. 2.

233 Iordanov 2004, *passim*.

234 Iordanov 2004, 481–482.

235 See the publication of this source in *P. Magistri, qui Anonymus dicitur* 2001, 13–62; p. 13: “it is presumed that [the *Anonymous*] was written around 1200”, with the use of oral traditions, legends and folklore, “along with the earliest version of *Gesta Hungarorum* from the 11th century”.

236 Iordanov 2004, 481–482.

century. This leads us to the assumption that the title *Keanus Magnus* actually belonged to a local Bulgarian lord, who was subordinate to the central authorities in Preslav.²³⁷ The latter tried to repel the Hungarians in the Transylvania region, in particular between the Tisza and the Danube Rivers.²³⁸

According to Khristo Dimitrov, these accounts from the *Anonymous* most probably reflected the state of affairs in the above-said region during the Magyar invasion there in the late 9th century. Dimitrov is inclined to believe that at the time, the control over these lands was divided between three Bulgarians. The first one was called Salan, whom Dimitrov sees as the possible “‘grandson’ or, rather, great-grandson of Khan Omurtag”, i.e. the brother or cousin of Boris-Michael and uncle (*sic*) of the Bulgarian ruler at the time, Simeon. Salan ruled over the area between Tisza and the Middle Danube. The second Bulgarian was Menumorut, lord of the lands east of Tisza, north of the Maros (Mures) River and south of the Szamos River; while the third was Glad, who ruled the territory south of Menumorut’s lands and up till present-day Orsova. The latter’s lands were conquered by the Hungarians only during the rule of his successor Ahtum (Ajtony), in the early 11th century. Khristo Dimitrov views these three historical figures as ‘Bulgarian *komiti*’,²³⁹ i.e. regional governors. Lastly, let us also note the shared opinion among scholars regarding the *Anonymous*: namely, that it presents the acts of the Magyars by mixing various events and time periods and thus cannot be seen as completely trustworthy with regard to the reconstruction of dates, specific events and names, etc.²⁴⁰

The title *khagan* can also be found in early medieval Bulgarian written documents, though in the form of *gaggan* (*sic!*), just as it appears in the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism. The work in question is *Assumption of Cyril* (Short *Vita* of St. Cyril/Constantine-Cyril the Philosopher), which contains phrases like “the kniaz-gaggan of the Khazar”, “gaggan, when he saw the philosopher [Constantine-Cyril]”, “and the gaggan gave him [Constantine-Cyril] many presents” and the like.²⁴¹ Konstantin Mechev directly states that here, “the concepts

237 Tăpkova-Zaimova 1976, 26–28; see Bozhilov 1979, 116 and n. 95, that the Bulgarians ruled over these lands until the very end of the 10th century; cf. also Koledarov 1979, 18, 38, 52, who believes that those lands were captured by the Hungarians only after their defeat at the Battle of Lechfeld in 955 at the hands of Emperor Otto I, i.e. in the times of the Bulgarian tsar Petur.

238 For a detailed account of the Bulgarian-Hungarian wars in this region, see Dimitrov 1998, 44–70 and esp. 50–54.

239 For further details, see Dimitrov 1998, 50–53.

240 For a detailed critical analysis of the various opinions on this subject until the end of the 20th century, see Dimitrov 1998, 44–49, 54.

241 Ivanov 1970, 286; Mechev 1999, 29–30; Trendafilov 1999, 26.

of ‘kniaz’ and ‘gagan’ are synonymous ruler titles”.²⁴² The problem in this case, however, is that the text does not refer to a Bulgarian ruler from the 860s (Cyril’s mission among the Khazars is dated to c. 861), titled *khagan/kagan*, but to the Khazar one; the Slavic appellative *kniaz*, i.e. ‘prince’ is obviously used to clarify the title of the supreme ruler of the Khazar Khaganate, who is presented here as *gagan*. It must be said that such a phonetic and graphic form of the title *khagan (gaganus)*, is also seen in Western Europe, alongside the more well-known forms *chaganus, chacanus, cacanus*.²⁴³ Jordan Ivanov, commenting on the name of Odelian in *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* as Tsar Samuil’s grandson, Petur Delian, has suggested viewing *gagan* as a “spoken form” of the Turkic title *khagan*.²⁴⁴ This last assumption brings us to the so-called Sogdian documents from Mount Mug in Middle Asia (the ancient and early medieval Sogdiana/Sogd) and, in particular, some of them that date to the first half of the 8th century and contain the form *ggn*, i.e. *gagan*. At the time, Sogdiana was under the strong influence of the Turkic Khaganate and its descendant states of the Uighurs and the Karluks, while some parts of the region were under the direct rule of the Turkic-speaking khagans (or yabgu-khagans).

And so, to ignore the domestic (and serial in nature) sources in favor of those from Western Europe, especially ones that emerged much later than the 9th century, seems completely unjustified to me, in light of the adequate interpretation of the circumstances surrounding the emergence of the *khagan* title in the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism from the 11th–12th centuries. In the so-described situation with the sources we are left with the possibility to look for other probable explanations for the existence of said title among the Danube Bulgarians, and in a very unusual genre too—that of the apocrypha (historical apocalypticism). There, manipulations of accounts from various *Tales* or *Chronicles* occur quite often, in order to impose new ideas and views on such *topoi* as ‘chosen people’, ‘last emperor/king’ before the *End of Times* and the like. It seems to me that our search should take us in the direction of the Byzantine chronicles and visionary works, and, in general, towards written sources from the period preceding 1018, where the unknown Bulgarian authors from the 10th–12th centuries were most likely to have found the initial mention (or, at least, the traces) of this title and the political-and-ideological ambitions concealed within it.

242 Mechev, 1999, 29–31.

243 Konovalova 2001, 126 and n. 2.

244 See Ivanov (2nd edition) 1970, 273–287.

And so, why does the appearance of the *khagan* title in the so-called historical apocalyptic literature in Bulgaria during the second half of the 11th century²⁴⁵ seem so unexpected? It has been used by the unknown Bulgarian scribes with regard to the baptizer Boris-Michael and to Petur Delian, the leader of the first Bulgarian uprising against the Byzantines in 1040/1041.

In texts such as the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah* or *Vision of Isaiah* and *Vision* (and also *Interpretation*) of Daniel, Prince Boris is referred to as 'Khagan Michael', and Petur Delian—as 'Tsar Gagan', i.e. 'tsar khagan' (*sic*); at the same time they are both also called 'tsars'.²⁴⁶ However, in *Vision of Isaiah* from the 13th century, the title of Michael is '*kniiaz*', while Petur Delian is completely missing from it.²⁴⁷ According to Anisava Miltenova, the latter text was most probably written in the 1270s, but not before 1261, when the basileus Michael VIII Palaiologos restored the Byzantine rule over Constantinople.²⁴⁸ It is, of course, entirely possible that this is the result of a Russian (or Serbian?) editing of an older Bulgarian protograph, since *kniiaz* is more typical for these ruler-titling traditions, especially in Russia.

All these observations, however, logically lead to the question: "Why was it so important for the Bulgarians from the second half of the 11th century to use the title of *khagan* as *their own*, provided that it cannot be found in any original Bulgarian written sources?" And another question: is it possible to find a connection here, between the type of literature—historical apocalypticism—and the expectations for a Second Coming of Christ in Europe during the second half of the 10th and the 11th century?

The first question could be answered by referring to the long-standing observation that traditional societies, and especially during crisis periods, very often saw the activation of the so-called 'oral memory', typical for ethnic groups with no written traditions.²⁴⁹ In view of the second question, it is important to stress that in the *Tales* and *Visions* Boris-Michael is presented with a number of attributes of the Last King, who was to confront Antichrist before the Second Coming of Christ, while in the cycle of apocalyptic texts from the second half of the 11th century, Petur Delian is described as tsar of the Bulgarians and the

245 See an edition of the texts in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996; see also the English translations of these texts, in Petkov 2008, 194–212.

246 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 125, 135, 136, 150, 151, 155, 156, 196, 198, 200, 202.

247 See Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 233, 238; Petkov 2008, 530.

248 Miltenova 1992, 81; Miltenova 1991, 143–144.

249 An opinion shared with the author of the present book by Jonathan Shepard, in a private letter from 15 August 2005.

Greeks.²⁵⁰ It is known that the Last Roman Emperor was quite a vague figure in the work of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara: he had no name, nor any distinguishable physical features. In this sense, his image is similar to that of the Jewish Messiah, with Paul Alexander directly stating that the Syriac who created his *Apocalypse* at the end of the 7th century has clearly used the formulation of the Jewish prophets. In their works, the Messiah is described as ‘King’, ‘Savior/Redeemer’ or ‘Anointed (King)’, just as Pseudo-Methodius speaks of ‘King’ (of the Greeks) and ‘Savior/Redeemer’.²⁵¹

In truth, it can be assumed that the answer to the second of the above questions was given a while ago and it is positive: there is an undeniable connection between the aforementioned expectations and this much liked genre in the Middle Ages.²⁵² In both cases there are clear allusions, firstly with the notion of the empire *per se*, i.e. as an embodiment of the absolute ‘law’ and ‘order’ (*nomos*, and, respectively, *taxis* in Greek), and secondly with the idea of the Christian Empire made up of two God-chosen people, the Byzantines and the Bulgarians. As was noted above, the latter idea reached its final form in Bulgaria in the 10th century,²⁵³ when the Bulgarians, and especially their *literati*, adopted the Byzantine concept of the two-part Christian (Byzantine) Empire, the so-called East (*Anatole* in Greek) and West (*Dysis* in Greek), which were represented by the Byzantines and, respectively, the Bulgarians. This is why in this type of texts and, in particular, in the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, the first Bulgarian ruler who was accepted as a legitimate ‘tsar’ (*basileus*) by Byzantium, Petur (927–969), the son of Simeon (893–927), is presented with the phrase “Tsar Petur, [who] was tsar of the Bulgarians and also [tsar] of the Greeks”.²⁵⁴ This same Tsar Petur was also seen by the anonymous Bulgarian scribe as a close friend of his contemporary, the Byzantine basileus Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (the literal phrase being “Tsar Petur and Tsar Constantine loved one another”). At the same time, the text also contains a suggestion regarding the first Christian ruler of the Roman Empire, Constantine the Great, Equal to the apostles, as seen through the prism of the well-known archetype of the Tree of the Cross/the True Cross. Actually, the idea of the unknown Bulgarian chronicler in this case is quite clear: while Tsar Petur ruled the western part of the Christian Empire (*Dysis*), Basileus Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus was at the helm (although only nominally in the beginning) of the eastern part of the Empire (*Anatole*); at the same time, both monarchs

250 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 198, 202; Petkov 2008, 199.

251 Alexander 1978c, 6.

252 Turilov 1988, 37–38; Miltenova 1991, 139 and n. 22.

253 Polyvianni 2000, 79 ff.; Stepanov S.a., 122–129; see also Vachkova 2006, 295–303.

254 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 196, 200; Petkov 2008, 196.

ruled—as equals—over the unified by presumption Christian empire which had a special salvational mission before the *End of Times*.

It is obvious that the anonymous Bulgarian author quite intentionally combined in the text realia from two different time periods (from the first half of the 4th century and from the first half of the 10th century), since this genre by presumption always refers to eternity. Also worth noting is the fact that for those Christians who anxiously awaited the Second Coming did not seek the actual historical truth, but the imaginary bond between God, His 'chosen people'—the Bulgarians and the Byzantines/Greeks in this case—and their respective tsars/basilei. And another thing in addition. As has already been said, this type of texts 'encouraged' the mixing of the profane time (past, present, future) in the name of *eternity*, since they *a priori* allow the merging of these three modes of time in the name of one of the main ideas in Christianity, that of the *Last Times*, the Last Judgment and the Salvation.

One more detail of this type of texts deserves closer attention. This phenomenon has, in fact, already been properly addressed in Chapter 1 and 2 of the present study. Nevertheless, let me point out once again that the aforementioned Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts are dated to the second half of the 11th century, with the *terminus ante quem non* certainly being 1041. Thus, their connection to the *End*, expected to occur circa 1092, cannot be denied.²⁵⁵

Since the issue of the 'salvational' names *Petur* and *Michael*, which were special for the Bulgarians, will have its own specific paragraph further on, here I would like to simply imply at some possible interpretations of the name *Michael*. It would probably be worth seeking a possible connection-and-overlay between the name of one of the Byzantine basilei of the 9th century and the godfather of Boris I, Michael III,²⁵⁶ and that of the Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael himself, who also lived in that age. We should, however, also consider the possibility of a potential contamination between the name of St. Michael the Archangel and that of the Bulgarian prince, since the cult of St. Michael was sufficiently well-established also in the Bulgarian lands. This is something that has been asserted back in 1983 by Stefan Kozhukharov, in an article published in a collection of studies entitled "Theory of Literature and Folkloristics", in honor of the 70th anniversary of Petur Dinekov.²⁵⁷ If this

255 For further details, see Mollov 1997; Miltenova 2006, 847–868.

256 See further details in Vasiliev 1946, 237–248; Alexander 1978c, 1–15; Alexander 1985, 151–184 (the chapter "The Last Roman Emperor").

257 See also Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 69 and n. 27; Cheshmedzhiev 1999, 158–175; Cheshmedzhiev 1996, 52–61; on the presentation of St. Michael the Archangel in Byzantium, see, for instance, Peers 2001, 157–193; on the spread of works on St. Michael in the old Bulgarian literature, see Atanasova 2008, 103–115.

is indeed so, then this is perhaps the result of the triggering of the old and familiar matrix *per analogiam*, which was widely known in the Middle Ages.

Although only hypothetically for the moment, such a contamination could be viewed also in a much larger, pan-European context. In the East, St. Michael has been known from ancient times not so much for his warrior image as for his healing abilities,²⁵⁸ although later, from the 9th century onwards, there was a tendency to also associate him with qualities inherent to warriors, especially protection. This notion was well known in Byzantium: St. Michael was the leader of the heavenly army of angels and saints that protected the empire and the basileus. The notion is directly related to a passage from the New Testament, St. John's *Revelation* (12:7–8), which reads as follows: "Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven." At the same time, the image of St. Michael as a warrior was inherent to Christian Western Europe from the very beginning—something which has been demonstrated in Chapter 1. During the second half of the 10th century and the following 11th century (see also Chapter 1), Western Europe saw a serious rise of the cult of St. Michael.²⁵⁹ Daniel Callahan emphasizes this fact in a specific study, where he draws special attention to the rapid spread of the cult in the period between 950 and 1050 in the territories of present-day Italy, Germany (especially Hildesheim and Bamberg), France, and among the Anglo-Saxons.²⁶⁰ Therefore, the potential presentation in this type of literature of Boris-Michael as a warrior of Christ, as the 'Last Tsar' and as a fighter against Antichrist cannot be denied by any interpreter of this text.

Let us now return to the question at hand, namely, why the Bulgarian prince and baptiser was titled in some historical apocalyptic texts as *khagan*. In the second half of the 11th century, Bulgaria did not exist as an independent kingdom, i.e. after 1018 there was no legitimate reason for the existence of a Bulgarian 'tsar' (or 'basileus', if we were to use the Greek equivalent of the Bulgarian title). In this situation, the unknown Bulgarian scribe—most probably a monk from one of the Bulgarian monasteries in present-day Western Bulgaria (somewhere in the region of Sofia, Pernik and Kiustendil, judged by the topographic realia contained in these apocalyptic texts)—used the *khagan* title to emphasize in a way the idea of the kingdom (empire), charged with a special mission. His additional intention seemingly was to attempt to 'revive' the memory of the old tradition of equating 'emperor'/'basileus' with

258 Callahan 2003, 181 and n. 3.

259 Callahan 2003, 181–204.

260 Callahan 2003, 182.

'tsar', 'khagan' and 'shahinshah'. However, the most important motive here, I think, could again be related to the anticipated *End of the world* before 1092 and, accordingly, to the desire of the unknown scribe to place on the same plane the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, as the two parts of the chosen people of Christ. In this way, he wanted to remind his readers that the Bulgarians had come to the lands of Southeastern Europe from the space labeled today by historians with such terms as *Pax Nomadica* and/or 'steppe empire', as well as that after the beginning of the 9th century, the Bulgarians had ruled over most of the western part of the 'steppe empire' (in the east, their dominion most likely stretched to the Dniester River), as well as over large parts of the territories that the Byzantines traditionally called the *West* of their empire. In truth, the anonymous author was trying to use the supreme title of steppe Eurasia, *khagan*, as seen through the prism of his *own*,²⁶¹ i.e. as a sign of the traditional positioning of the Bulgarians and their state in this part of Europe. It seems to me that Todor Mollov is correct in his assumption that during the Byzantine rule, there was "a revival of the pagan titles *khagan* and *kavkhan*", which at that point were "more of a sign of 'the own', of belonging for the Bulgarians rather than a return to paganism".²⁶² This means we can confidently view this title as a substitute for the Bulgarian Tsardom and the 'tsar' title that had both ceased to exist after 1018.

Such divergences, seemingly incompatible with Christianity and its traditions in titlature, were not uncommon for the Middle Ages. For example, far to the northeast of Danube Bulgaria, in the lands of Kievan Rus', a cleric of a much higher standing, Metropolitan Hilarion, went so far as to call kniaz Vladimir († 1015)—the ruler that Christianized Kievan Rus'—"the new Constantine", also giving this same kniaz the title of '*khagan*' in his aforementioned *Sermon on Law and Grace*. Hilarion also gave the '*khagan*' title to one of Vladimir's descendants, Iaroslav the Wise (1018–1054).²⁶³ If such a renowned Church leader of Kievan Rus' could mix pagan and Christian heritage in the mid-11th century, then it is quite plausible to assume that the Bulgarian anonymous scribes could also have done it, especially in literary texts, which by definition were not intended for wide public use (public readings). Although popular enough, such books and compilations rarely left the premises of the monasteries they were written in.

261 Mollov 1997, 49 and n. 40, 53.

262 Mollov 1997, 49 and n. 40.

263 See the text in Moldovan 1984; on some of the motives behind such titling, see Noonan 2001, 76–102; Stepanov 2005a, 263–279.

In contrast to the opinion of both Thomas Noonan and the author of the present book, Savelii Senderovich offers a different interpretation of the *khagan* title among the Rus' and, in particular, with regard to Prince Vladimir and his son, Iaroslav the Wise.²⁶⁴ According to him, it would be more logical to seek a connection through the prototype of the righteous priest-king, i.e. Melchizedek, since the Khazar khagan also had similar traits. In accordance with Judaism, adopted as the 'state' religion of the Khazars in the 9th century, the priestly functions of the khagan increased substantially at the expense of his political and military ones; in other words, he became indeed a 'gentle', 'peaceful' ruler, a 'righteous king'. Could this same reference be used for our case with Boris-Michael and especially with the militant Petur Delian? For now it seems to me that such approximation can hardly be proven on the basis of the available data, the traditional (royal) prototypes of the Old Testament used by the Bulgarians in the 9th–10th centuries,²⁶⁵ and in view of the specific images found in the historical apocalyptic texts.

Petur Delian was the son of the Bulgarian tsar Gavril Radomir (1014–1015). His mother was a Hungarian princess.²⁶⁶ Delian himself came to Bulgaria from the lands of the Magyars, but he was recognized as a 'tsar' by the Bulgarians not only because he was the son of Tsar Gavril Radomir (1014–1015) and grandson of Samuel († 1014), but also because he was given the name Petur (II), the most 'tsarlike' name among the Bulgarians at least until the end of the 12th century.²⁶⁷

Is it possible to see some kind of connection between this revival of the *khagan* title and the invasions of the Pechenegs and the Uzes in the Bulgarian lands after the 1030s and up until the famous Battle of Levounion (1091), when Basileus Alexios I Komnenos put an end to their domination over the Byzantine lands? These tribes actually invaded from the territories beyond the Danube, known namely as the 'steppe empire'. Mostly in the minds of the Byzantines, these lands were primarily under the control of the Avar and Khazar khagans in the period between the second half of the 6th and the 10th century. And precisely between these two 'great powers' of the western part

264 See Senderovich 1996, 300–313.

265 Traditionally, a similarity has been sought with David and Moses—for the latter, see, for example, Rashev 2007, 60–72; see the specific visual aspect especially in the imitation of King David in Bakalova 2008, 93–131.

266 On the uprising as seen through the prism of apocalypticism, see Miltenova and Kaimakamova 1983, 52–73; on the Hungarian 'context' of the uprising, see Dimitrov 1998, 94 and n. 14 and 15.

267 On the use of the name 'Petur', its semantic value and the ideological 'program' behind it, see Biliarsky 2001, 32–44; Biliarsky 2004, 17–42; Stepanov 2003a, 30–38, as well as further on in this chapter.

of steppe Eurasia in the abovementioned time period is where the Bulgar(ian)s wedged themselves in. Therefore, such a reference seems entirely possible, since it is hardly by chance that the so-called *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* ends with an account of the Pecheneg devastation in the Bulgarian territories, as discussed above.²⁶⁸ And yet it is important to clarify that the text of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* does not contain an explicitly cited connection between the use of the *khagan* title and these invasions, since, as is well known, the so-called late nomads from the 10th to the early 13th century (the Pechenegs, the Uzès and the Cumans) did not seem to have used this title. Neither one of these three nomadic confederations managed to reach the stage of 'steppe empire', so as to enable its rulers to legitimately adopt the supreme title of *khagan*.²⁶⁹

Perhaps the specific genre, together with the increased apocalyptic expectations in all of Christian Europe,²⁷⁰ was at the base of these seemingly strange contaminations in the *Visions*, *Exegeses* and *Tales*. Their *pathos* is centered around the idea that the Bulgarians—albeit without a kingdom of their own after 1018—have a God-assigned salvational mission, since they are 'a chosen people of God' that has come to 'replace' the old 'chosen' people of Israel,²⁷¹ and their (Bulgarian) ruler is marked, if not with the sign of the Last Tsar,²⁷² then at least with signs typical for the impending *Last Times*.

Is it, however, possible that there also existed some kind of literary primary source that had influenced the unknown Bulgarian author in his decision to choose the title *khagan*, which, as has already been pointed out, was not used as the supreme title of the Bulgar rulers either in the Byzantine or in the local Bulgarian medieval written documents from the 9th century?

The above question, at least at the present stage of research and in this particular aspect, would have to remain just as an opportunity for reflection, in my opinion. It seems to me that this line of thought would have to start from

268 See the specific passage in Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 198, 200: "And then again appeared some violators and deceivers called Pechenegs, infidels and lawless ones"; see also Petkov 2008, 199.

269 On some speculative musings, as well as some misinterpretations of my views on this matter, see Iordanov 2004, 479, 487, 489.

270 On these expectations in Byzantium, see Alexander 1978, No. xv; Beck 1959, 394, 478; Podskalsky 1972; Magdalino 2003, 233–270; on Western Europe, which, according to some, went through a real crisis of eschatological anticipations on the threshold between the 10th and the 11th century, see, for instance, Landes 2000, 97–145; The Peace of God 1992, as well as the book *The Apocalyptic Year 1000*, where a considerable amount of literature is cited on this topic.

271 Ivanova 2006, 69.

272 See also Möhring 2000.

the point, from which the medieval Christian authors from the 8th century onwards also began their apocalyptic studies—namely, from the well-known Syrian apocrypha and the *Revelation* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara in particular. As mentioned previously, this *Revelation* was both ‘exemplary’ and emblematic for this type of literary works and, following the tradition established in scientific circles, was seen as such also by the Bulgarians after their conversion to Christianity. The various studies of its translations, transcripts and editions are all long-standing, since they all have prompted scientific interest for more than a century now.²⁷³ In the words of Paul Alexander, the translation of the Pseudo-Methodius’ work in Greek marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Byzantine eschatology, with the later Latin and Slavic translations undergoing various greater or lesser changes and modifications. In some of them, especially those that were later attributed to the prophet Daniel, the authors omitted parts of the original that referred to ancient history,²⁷⁴ since for them the ‘apocalyptic imagination’ stood in the forefront. This statement of the late Paul Alexander is undoubtedly important for our thesis. Like many other famous apocalyptic works which had a significant influence on the perceptions of later generations, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara emerged in a time of crisis: during the unexpectedly swift victories of the Arabs over Byzantium after the 630s and especially at the end of the same century. This is why the *Apocalypse* was viewed as text offering hope, and for this reason it would be hardly surprising if it was widely read in those turbulent times.²⁷⁵

In medieval Bulgaria, this text was translated and edited several times, as has already been said. It has been established that during the 10th–11th century, two translations were made of the work: 1) by learned men from the inner circle of Kniaz Simeon—testified in its earliest transcript in MS 382 (453) from the Hilandar monastery and dated to the 13th–14th century, though the beginning there is missing (!); 2) it also existed in the 11th century, in a so-called interpolated redaction, which today can be found in MS 147 of the Royal Library in Copenhagen (from the 17th century), in a Russian transcript. Another translation was made in Bulgaria in the 14th century, the earliest transcript of which can be found in MS 38 from the Synodal Collection of the State

273 For a critical edition of the text of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara’s *Apocalypse*, see Reinink 1993; the Greek and Latin versions have been published in the same series in 1998 (Vol. 569–570/ Subsidia T. 97–98) by W. J. Aerts and G. A. A. Kortekaas; for an older edition of the four Greek versions see Lolos 1978; see also Istrin 1897, 84–142; Reinink 1992, 149–187; Reinink 1988, 82–111; Drijvers 1992, 67–74; Drijvers 1992b, 189–213; Reinink 1992b, 75–86; Alexander 1985.

274 Alexander 1978, 61/No. xv.

275 McGinn 1979, 71–72.

Historical Museum in Moscow; it was written by a priest by the name of Philip in 1344/1345,²⁷⁶ but it is not relevant for the present study, as it exceeds the time horizon of the 12th century.

The most significant transcript in our case seems to be the one from MS 382 (HM. SMS 382), which, with a great deal of probability, was composed during the reign of Tsar Simeon I of Bulgaria. There, on f. 74 r, is the account of the demise of some of the so-called world kingdoms, for example the Macedonian one, after which are mentioned "the kingdoms of the pagan countries", i.e. "the kingdom of the *Obry* and that of the Ugrians". These names signify the state of the Avars (who were called *Obry* in some Slavic and especially Rus'ian manuscripts) and that of the Ugrians, as the Magyars were often called in medieval Slavic written documents. But if the Avars in Central Europe were known to have had a khaganate (i.e. empire) from the 560s to the 790s/early 9th century (805?), then what gave the anonymous scribe enough reason to include the Magyars in the so-called world kingdoms? The answer is easy enough, given the fact that in the original texts of the Greek translations/redactions, instead of 'Ugrians' stood 'Turks'. In fact, there are also Slavic manuscripts of the same work, in which the "barbaric kingdom" is defined namely as the kingdom of the "Turks and Avars" (*tsarstvo varvar "skoe, ezhe sut" tourtsi i avari*).²⁷⁷

Vasilii Istrin is inclined to accept that 'Turks' initially denoted the Magyars, and later, from the 13th–14th century onwards—the Ottoman Turks.²⁷⁸ This, however, may be true only regarding the transcript of Priest Philip from 1345, but not the original text, where 'Turks' meant first and foremost the Turks of the First (Western) Turkic Khaganate. This particular passage was also present in the original text,²⁷⁹ which appeared in the Syrian lands sometime during the second half of the 7th century, and most probably at the very end of it (in 691/692, according to Gerrit Reinink). It was precisely at that time that the khaganates of the Turks and the Avars were *sui generis* 'world powers'.

In the 9th and especially from the 10th century onwards, in Byzantium the name 'Turks' (*Tourkoi*) began to be used with regard to the Magyars,²⁸⁰ which can also be found in the works of such an erudite author as Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.²⁸¹ Even the Magyars themselves also often called their own

276 Miltenova 2003, 337; see also Penkova 1977, 102–113.

277 See Tikhonravov 1973, 220; see also Thomson 1985, 143–173, the original text is on pp. 156–173, and the passage in question is on p. 163: "*varvarsko tsarstvo, rekshe zhe Turtsi i Obr*".

278 Istrin 1897, 172–173.

279 See in the edition of Reinink 1993, 93: "... das Königreich der Barbaren, d. h. das der Turken und der Avaren".

280 Howard-Johnston 2007, 187 ff.; cf. Róna-Tas 1999, 275–278.

281 *De adm. imp.*, 39–40.

state *Tourkia* after the 11th century (*cf.* one of the titles of their king after the 11th century, *rex Tourkie*), obviously seeking to benefit from the use of such an important and prestigious politonym. It would therefore be logical to assume that the unknown Bulgarian scribe translated the original ‘Turks’ from the above text by updating it: he had understood its meaning in the Greek texts to be ‘Magyars’. In the Slavic tradition, however, ‘Magyars’ was usually translated as ‘Ugrians’. This was probably how one of the ‘world kingdoms’—an element of much significance in the historical apocalyptic texts that followed the archetypal prophecy of Daniel—became ‘Ugrian’ in the Bulgarian anonymous text. The anonymous writer-and-translator went even further: immediately following this passage about the ‘heathen kingdom’ (*pogansko tsarstvo*) he wrote that it was destroyed by the Greeks—something that does not correspond to the historical truth. As has already been established, the real history did not interest this type of people (monks?) in the way it did historians such as Procopius of Caesarea, Menander, Agathias of Myrina and similar Byzantine authors from later centuries.

What is evident from these passages is that in the apocalyptic tradition after the 7th century, the place of one of the ‘world kingdoms’ was permanently taken by the khaganates of the Turks and the Avars. There was therefore an established image of the ‘steppe empire’ and it was this empire and its heritage that the Bulgarians could have felt close to (and why not even proud of?). And the prestige was undeniable also from the second half of the 6th century onwards, as Peter Brown clearly states in his book, ‘The World of Late Antiquity’: in Ctesiphon, the capital of one of the ‘world kingdoms’, Persia, at the palace of the great Sassanian shahinshah Khosro I (531–579), three special seats stood beneath the royal throne; one was for the emperor of China, another—for the great khagan of the steppes, and the third one was for the Byzantine emperor, “in case these rulers came, as vassals, to the court of the shahinshah—the king of kings”.²⁸²

There is yet another thing in this connection which is too important not to be properly addressed here. It is the explicit presentation of the Bulgarians—alongside the Turks—as the rulers of one of these ‘world kingdoms’, the ‘barbarian’ one in particular. The passage in question can be found in the third Greek redaction of the work, thought to have been written between the 10th and the 13th centuries. There, the ‘Turks and Bulgarians’ are defined as ‘emperors of the barbarians’ (“*hoi gar basileis ton barbaron toutesti Tourkoi kai Boulgaroi*” in Greek). They had risen against the Byzantines after the kingdom of the Macedonians and the Egyptians was destroyed, but “even they were

²⁸² See Brown 1999.

defeated by the Byzantine tsardom".²⁸³ Clearly, this is another example of the 'updating' of the original text, this time by the hand of the third Greek edition's Byzantine author. It is hard to say who the 'Turks' in the above passage actually are—whether this term referred to the 'Turks' from the two khaganates (which had existed between the mid-6th century and the 740s), or perhaps here it would be more correct to view this term as having been updated after the 9th century and thus again denoting the Magyars,²⁸⁴ and not, as Gyula Moravcsik assumes, the Khazars.²⁸⁵ Given the way the medieval authors after the 830s associated the Magyars with the Khazars, as well as the fact that the Bulgarians, even after their conversion to Christianity, were often seen as akin to the Avars and the Khazars by Byzantine writers, 'linking' the Bulgarians to the so-called barbarian kingdom in this type of literature does not seem so surprising.

Was the Bulgarian author of the historical apocalyptic texts from the 11th century acquainted with these redactions of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara's work? Was it from there that he borrowed the idea of the 'barbarian kingdom', i.e. of the steppe empire and its corresponding supreme title, *khagan*, in order to adapt it to the Bulgarian conditions in the second half of the 11th century? Could the appearance of the *khagan* title in Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts after the mid-11th century be merely the result of the erudition of some Bulgarian *literati*? These are all questions that cannot be answered in a definitive way, at least at present. I would, however, like to point out that this work of Pseudo-Methodius in particular was not defined as apocryphal by the Church of Byzantium and the Eastern Orthodox states in general, which meant that it was popular enough and familiar to many, especially the monks. In the words of Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anisava Miltenova, "during the second half of the 11th century, the *Revelation* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara was one of the relevant literary works, and its text was used as an indirect reflection of events in Bulgarian history".²⁸⁶

In the abovementioned letter written by Jonathan Shepard to the author of this book, Shepard assumes that the use of the title *khagan* and the general turn towards the past by the unknown author in "occupied Bulgaria" were mostly the result of nostalgia. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that in this text of the *Interpretation* of prophet Daniel from the 11th century, the passage "... and khagan Michael shall rise among the Bulgarians"

283 See the passage in Grutski izvori za bulgarskata istoriia 1964/5, 68; see also Istrin 1897, 98–99.

284 Dimitrov 1998, 76.

285 Moravcsik 1958/1, 426.

286 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 165.

is immediately followed by the very indicative sentence: “A tsardom was not given to the Bulgarians, but they took it by force”.²⁸⁷

After 1185/1186, Bulgaria regained its independence, and from 1235 it was legitimated by the official recognition of the Bulgarian ruler’s ‘tsar’ title by all the Eastern patriarchs, as well as by the basileus of Nicaea John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222–1254). Thus, the need for the Bulgarians to emphasize their *own* and the khagan title in particular ceased. And although this period exceeds the chronological frame of the present study, I feel it is nevertheless important to mark the further development of the motif of the Last Emperor named *Michael* and titled *khagan* in the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts. In April 1204, Constantinople, the center of the Byzantine (i.e. Christian by presumption) empire, was captured by the knights of the Fourth Crusade and Venice. Thus, new ‘players’ appeared on the historical stage in Southeastern Europe, where up till 1018 the powers had been only two: the Byzantine state and the Bulgarian one. The steppes north of the Black Sea and east of the Danube Delta were now permanently occupied by the Cumans, and after the 1220s—also by the Mongols. In 1261, Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259/1261–1282) regained control of Constantinople, thus restoring the integrity of Byzantium, which until then was, as it was aptly called, “in exile”. This is the general context in which *Vision of the Prophet Isaiah about the Last Times* was written, included in the so-called *Collection of Priest Dragol (Dragolov Sbornik)* in Serbia. Here, the title of the last tsar, Michael, was *kniaz*, i.e. “prince” (*Mikhailou knezou*).²⁸⁸ According to Anisava Miltenova, this name actually referred to the Byzantine basileus Michael VIII Palaiologos.²⁸⁹ It seems to me that in this case it would be more appropriate to view this as a contamination between the two images, as well as a reverberation from the Bulgarian apocalyptic texts that had served as an example for the Serbian compiler. In other words, it is very likely that ‘kniaz Michael’ actually denoted the foretype of the Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael, along with that of the Byzantine basileus, unifier of the empire after 1261. Thus, the title *khagan*, known from the apocalyptic cycle of the second half of the 11th century, has been replaced here by the Slavic title *kniaz*, since *khagan* was completely inadequate to the historical situation after 1261, when the *Collection of Priest Dragol* was created.

It is the abovementioned *Vision* from the *Collection of Priest Dragol* that contains the emblematic and polysemantic expression ‘Mezina Land’, which has also been discussed elsewhere in this book. It is important to note here

287 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 125, 135.

288 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 233, 238; Petkov 2008, 530.

289 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 240, n. 18.

that during the period between 1204 and 1261, many Bulgarian *literati* most probably perceived their Empire as the center of Orthodoxy (as the 'navel of the world'), since Constantinople was in the hands of the Latin 'schismatics'. This perception would go on to gain legitimate grounds after 1235, and after the Second Council of Lyon (1274) and the 'pact' signed there between the Catholic Church and Byzantium, it would also have its textual codifications (*cf.* the rendering of the Bulgarian patriarch as a "pillar of Orthodoxy" namely after 1274, and in a Bulgarian marginal note dated to 1276/7 in particular; let me also call to mind the fact that the texts in the *Collection of Priest Dragol* were compiled *terminus ante quem non* 1261 and the 1280s). Thus, the Bulgarian ruler of that time was quite justifiably perceived as a defender of the Orthodox faith, and at the level of imaginativeness—also as the Last Tsar, in the image of Tsar/Kniaz Michael, long-popular in this type of texts.

The notion of the 'divine chosenness' of the Bulgarians was obviously relevant also during the 13th century, whereas the uprising of Petur Delian was completely beyond the context of this age, which gave the compiler of the *Collection of Priest Dragol* enough reason to absolutely ignore it in this *Vision* of Prophet Isaiah. On the other hand, explicitly presented is the connection between Michael and "the New Jerusalem which is called the City of Constantine", the place 'Tabor' (its meaning here, as has been already mentioned elsewhere in this book, is not only and not so much a place of Christ's transfiguration, but, rather, as a "promised land, a place of enactment of the covenant with the chosen people"—*cf.* Ps. 88, 13), the Hagia Sophia cathedral, and the True Cross.²⁹⁰ This leaves no doubts regarding the productiveness of the image of the *kniaz* and his name, *Michael*, in the Medieval Bulgarian literature and in historical apocalypticism in particular. In view of all this, it seems strange that even today it is not quite clear when exactly the Bulgarian baptizer Boris-Michael was canonized: whether shortly after his death in May 907 or much later.²⁹¹ But this is another topic.

It can be assumed with a high degree of probability that the Bulgarian anonymous scribes and translators of apocalyptic texts allowed themselves to 'play' with the texts in various planes: the imperial memory (following the 'matrix' of the four 'world kingdoms'), the 'salvational' Christian one (*the own, Bulgarian*), uniting in a single conceived-and-imagined whole (and precisely

290 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 233, 237–238; Petkov 2008, 528–529; Stepanov S.a., 127–128.

291 For different opinions on the matter, see Giuzelev 1969, 497–510; Dragova 1983, 93–100; Georgieva 1991, 178–188; Cheshmedzhiev 1996, 52–61; Cheshmedzhiev 1999, 158–175; Georgiev 2004, 120.

through such imaginative cognitions) the *own* and the ‘cultural (Christian) memory’ in general, and last but not least, the salvational mission of the Last Tsar in the *Last Times*, as personified by the khagan/prince/tsar Michael, who, according to them, was chosen among the Bulgarians by the will of God. This was a genre that permitted such speculations, since they would have sounded too incongruous in an actual history or chronicle. And so, with the help of such speculations the unknown scribes presented history as the story of the fulfillment of prophecies (especially the ‘exemplar’ ones like those of Daniel and Isaiah in particular), thus once again confirming the true observation that Judeo-Christian history is, above all, such a (hi)story. Because only as such can this history permit *time* to be perceived teleologically and thus be overcome, in order to reach *eternity*, that cherished by the Christians eternity that was to come after the *End of Days*.

3.3.2.1 The ‘Chosen’ Bulgarian Tsars *Michael* and *Petur*: the Power of the ‘Salvational’ *Naming*

The presence of the names *Michael* and *Petur* in a royal and apocalyptic context during the period between the 11th and the 12th centuries encourages us to address the issue of the *power of the name* as a symbol (of the *renewal* of the Empire, of the power over a God-chosen people and of eschatological expectations) in the Bulgarian lands. What was it that these names legitimated and why was it that they became so meaningful precisely during the years of Byzantine rule, at least in some circles of learned Bulgarian monks? Moreover, why would they need to be ‘dusted off’ after the mid-11th century and what messages do they carry? These questions would help us find the answers also to some other important aspects of the Bulgarian notions about the *End of Times* and about the Bulgarians themselves as a ‘God-chosen people’, as well as about their *first* and *last* ruler. Which is why a look at the Bulgarian expectations regarding the *End of the world* from a slightly unexpected angle—the onomastic one—could provide us with new starting points for the analysis of the specific relation between the naming and the political aspirations.

The ontology of the Name,²⁹² however, will not be discussed below; what will be addressed instead is the socio-political use of the abovementioned names, their establishment in a specific society and, respectively, in a specific time, as well as in various specific texts. I will also not dwell on the issue of a name’s magical nature—a phenomenon also known during the Christian medieval period—and will instead simply note the well-known fact that the

292 On similar aspects, see, for instance, St. Dionysius the Areopagite 1996, 53–67; Losev 1994; Losev 1997, 179–182.

Christians also shared the notion of a name being perceived as a possible instrument to influence fate.²⁹³

As has been already commented upon by other authors,²⁹⁴ the names *Petur* and *Michael* were viewed also in an apocalyptic context, gaining a strong symbolic meaning among the Bulgarians. In addition, it seems to me that these two names began to take on the role of ethno-integrating and ethno-defining symbols that garnered specific expectations, meanings/reflections, etc. among the Bulgarians at the time. At the same time, however, they themselves began to emanate a 'royal' and 'apocalyptic' meaning both for the Bulgarian erudite society and for the Byzantines. In the Bulgarian *milieu*, both names were associated with Christianity, even though it is well known that especially *Michael* has its own easily-traceable (and also apocalyptic and eschatological) genealogy stemming from ancient Judaic times. Both *Michael* and *Petur* are the names of the only two canonized Bulgarian rulers, even though the chronological dimensions of Boris-Michael's canonization are still being disputed today.²⁹⁵

At his baptism, Boris took on the name of his godfather, the Byzantine basileus Michael III (killed in 867 by order of Basil I the Macedonian, who inherited his throne), but even after 864 his original pagan name continued to be actively used. This is attested by the fact of the naming of his descendant on the Bulgarian throne, Boris II, who died incongruously during his escape from Byzantium. At the same time, Simeon, the son of Boris-Michael, also named one of his sons Michael. The latter never managed to ascend the throne after the death of his father in 927, with this honor going to his younger brother, the would-be Tsar Petur (927–969). To this day, the Christian name of Boris II remains unknown: the Bulgarian ruler has remained in Bulgarian history only with his 'original' Bulgar pagan name. Against this backdrop, quite interesting is the Scandinavian naming tradition for heirs to the throne and rulers immediately after their baptism. Fedor Uspenskii demonstrates with specific examples the slow spread of the Christian name-giving practice in Scandinavia after the conversion to Christianity, especially in the case of the legitimate sons in royal families. Almost always the prospective legitimate heir to the throne was given a name that stemmed from pagan times. Even long after Scandinavia's

293 See Uspenskii 2001, 10.

294 See, for instance, Biliarsky 2001, 32–44; Biliarsky 2004; Cheshmedzhiev 1996, 52–61; Cheshmedzhiev 1999, 158–175; see also Stepanov 2003a, 30–38.

295 On the various aspects of this cult, from the literature during the last three decades, see, apart from the already mentioned authors, e.g. Dragova 1983, 93–100; Cheshmedzhiev 1999, 158–175; Cheshmedzhiev 1996, 52–61, see also: Vasiliev 1987; Trifonova 1998, 43–59; Cheshmedzhiev 2008, 67–72; Trendafilov 2008, 125–128; Nikolova 2009, 63–78.

Christianization, Christian names were still perceived as foreign there.²⁹⁶ Such a tradition probably existed also in other early medieval states in Europe; the Bulgarian *casus* is likely another such example.

With regard to the name *Michael* in particulate, another phenomenon from the region of Southeastern Europe and Byzantium deserves to be at least mentioned here. During the period following 811 (when Michael I Rangabe came to power and ruled until 813) and until the death of Michael VII Doukas in 1078, the Byzantine throne was routinely occupied by basilei bearing the name *Michael* (Michael II, 820–829; Michael III, 842–867; Michael IV, 1034–1041; Michael V, 1041–1042; Michael VI, 1056–1057; Michael VII, 1071–1078). One cannot help but wonder whether this name-giving tradition was solely the result of the ‘royal’ status of this name in Byzantium (alongside ‘Constantine’ and ‘Leo’),²⁹⁷ or whether there were more dimensions to this phenomenon. Something else, however, cannot be denied: this tradition ceased after the mid-9th century and was restored in the 1030s, with four rulers named Michael taking the throne during this period until the end of the 1070s. Whether this clustering of four basilei with the name *Michael* has anything to do with the expected *End of the world* in 1092, or whether it is a mere coincidence, is hard to determine with absolute certainty for the time being. As has been mentioned before, in Bulgaria, Boris-Michael’s name was further passed on to his grandson Michael, one of Tsar Simeon’s sons. The Serbian principality of Zeta was ruled from 1052 by Mikhailo, who officially became king in 1077. His son was Constantine Bodin, whom the Bulgarians that had rebelled in 1072 proclaimed as their tsar and named, just like Delian, ‘Petur’. This uprising was, however, more popular with the name of its other, Bulgarian, leader, the one stemming from a “Kavkhan family”, Georgi Voitekh.²⁹⁸

The introduction of the names *Peter* and *Michael* in an apocalyptic context a few decades after the fall of the Bulgarian Tsardom in 1018 gave an opportunity for the seamless ‘virtual’ inclusion of the Bulgarians into the already unified Empire (of the Byzantines, but also of the Bulgarians), that was nominally ruled from one center only—Constantinople. This is how the aforementioned image of ‘Khagan Michael’ came to be: as one of the tsars before the *Last Times*, but also as the figure of Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ ‘friend’, the Bulgarian ‘Tsar Petur’. The emergence of the motif of the unification between

296 Uspenskii 2001, 12 ff.

297 For more information on these names, see Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 66–75; on the name *Constantine* in Bulgarian history and ‘memory’, see Täpkova-Zaimova 1992, 9–15; on the idea of the *renewal* in the Byzantine Empire in the age before the end of the 13th century via the ‘Constantine’s paradigm’, see *New Constantines* 1993.

298 On this uprising see, for instance, Litavrin 1987, 303–310.

“the Bulgarian and the Greek tsardom” in historical apocalypticism was no coincidence; according to the unnamed Bulgarian scribe, it was achieved namely during the reign of Tsar Petur.²⁹⁹

At the same time, in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, Tsar Petur is said to have breathed his last not on Bulgarian soil, but in the city of Rome.³⁰⁰ The allusion here is undoubtedly with the name of St. Peter the Apostle,³⁰¹ who died a martyr's death precisely in the capital of the Roman Empire; and he is, as is well known, the foundation of the very Church. Thanks to this fictional connection, the anonymous Bulgarian scribe treated the history of the Bulgarians as a 'God-chosen people' by positioning the *end* of St. Tsar Petur's life in one of the most sacred centers in the history of the world, and of Christianity as well, Rome. Only from such a point of reference could the history of the salvation of the Bulgarians and their mission before Judgment Day be presented as a contribution made by them: in the form of an intercession before the Heavens, i.e. God, by their St. Tsar Petur, as one of the saints that would flank Jesus Christ on Judgment Day.

These and similar allusions to the *End* of the Kingdom and the Second Coming, based on the name system, were developed to a great extent by the unknown Bulgarian authors of apocalyptic texts after 1018. They became an element of the Bulgarian mentality, with a very distinct presence both in real life (as the specific naming of subsequent leaders of unsuccessful Bulgarian uprisings against the Byzantine rule in 1040 and in 1072), and in the written apocalyptic stories.

The case with Petur II (Delian) is one of the emblematic examples within the Bulgarian borders of the search for symbolic 'salvational' resources in the *name*, and quite soon after Bulgaria's fall in 1018 too. In contrast to the Bulgarian perceptions, however, the Byzantine authors who were contemporaries to Petur Delian's uprising persisted in employing the motif that Delian was no grandson of Tsar Samuil, but a mere adventurous impostor. It is not the place here to launch into debates whether this was true or not, i.e. whether the Byzantines had attempted to use the power of rhetoric to downplay the deeds of the Bulgarians who had rebelled in 1040 and especially to undermine their leader by presenting him as a man of lower origin, and not of 'royal blood'. Instead, I would like to let the sources speak for themselves. Here is what the accounts of this age can tell us. For example, the following passage can

299 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 200; Petkov 2008, 196–197; Polyviannyi 2000, 119; Stepanov 2003a, 31.

300 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 197, 201; Petkov 2008, 197.

301 Ivanov 1925, 283–285.

be found in the works of John Skylitzes: Delian “declared himself the son of Roman [Gavril Radomir], the son of Samuil who was born by the daughter of the king of Hungary, during the lifetime of Samuil”.³⁰²

The famous Michael Psellos provides further details in his *Chronographia*. According to him, Delian, the instigator of the Bulgarians,

stemmed from a family that did not even deserve a mention; he was characterized by his perfidy and was unsurpassed in his skill of treacherously deceiving his copatriots; he bore the name Dolian ... When he saw that the whole nation was ready to rise up against the Byzantines, but did nothing besides desire it due to the lack of a leader, he made every effort to prove that he was the most worthy ... Thus, he won the favor of the people, and in order to be elected a leader, he lacked only renowned origins (it is customary for the Bulgarians to put people of royal blood at the head of the nation). Therefore, since he knew of this law and custom established by the ancestors, he claimed that his family descended from the famous Samuil and his brother Aaron—and not long before these kings had ruled over their whole tribe. In addition, he did not claim a rightful descent from the royal family, but either fabricated or actually proved that he was a secondary offshoot of this root and skillfully persuaded the Bulgarians in this. And they raised him on a shield and entrusted him with power, and then ... they turned away from the Byzantines, rejected the yoke of their domination, and willfully took back their freedom ...³⁰³

In another work, again authored by Michael Psellos, Delian is presented as “some man from unknown origins”, who gained power over the Bulgarians by “claiming nobleness”.³⁰⁴ Shortly afterwards, Delian was joined by Alusian, of whom it is known with certainty that he was—as a son to Aaron—a genuine descendant of the Cometopuli. This made Delian fear that the Bulgarians could choose to pledge allegiance to Alusian, “since he was of royal blood”.³⁰⁵ Judging from Delian’s subsequently added second name, Petur, it seems quite likely that Delian was seeking dual legitimacy³⁰⁶ for his authority, by presenting himself not only as Samuil’s descendant, but also as symbolically related

³⁰² Ioannis Scylitzae 1973, 409.

³⁰³ Mikhail Psel 1999, 86–87 [III. 40].

³⁰⁴ Michaelis Pselli 1994, 32: *epifemisas eugeniam*; Ivanov 2012, 98, n. 8.

³⁰⁵ Ioannis Skylitzae 1973, 410; Ioannis Scylitzae 1965/v1, 305—“was of royal blood”.

³⁰⁶ Ivanov, 2012, 99.

to the first tsar-saint of the Bulgarians, Petur, who, as was mentioned here several times, was also recognized by the Byzantines as a legitimate “tsar of the Bulgarians” in the autumn of 927. Thus Delian could ‘boast’ origins that led to both royal dynasties which had ruled the Bulgarians after 802 and until 1018,³⁰⁷ the so-called Krum’s dynasty and Samuil’s dynasty.

The relation to these two dynasties can also be clearly seen in the fact that the Serbian heir to the throne Constantine Bodin was also given the name *Petur*, as has been noted in the analysis of Georgi Voitekh’s uprising (1072/1073). It is worth recalling here that during the second big uprising of the Bulgarians against the Byzantine rule in the 11th century, the legitimation was no longer based on the explicit mention of the memory of the second of the two dynasties: people knew that Constantine Bodin was the great-great-grandson of Samuil (Constantine’s grandmother was actually the daughter of Samuil’s daughter, Theodora-Kosara).³⁰⁸ It is hard to believe that the rebels in 1072 relied on the memory of their ancestors from 1040 and on the leader of those times, Tsar Petur (II),³⁰⁹ as the first uprising had ended without success. This memory did not contain anything meaningful—apart from Alusian—like a genuine symbolic heritage or which could be used as a symbolic message. Only the memory of the first legitimate Bulgarian tsar (and saint, too), Petur, possessed the potential to give some kind of symbolic legitimation to the act of Georgi Voitekh, Constantine Bodin (Petur III) and the Bulgarians who followed them.

It seems to me that Ivan Biliarsky is right in seeking a connection between the initial cult of Tsar Petur and that of Constantine the Great, Equal to the apostles: both cults are in direct relation to the notion of the *renovation of the Tsardom*, i.e. to the imperial ideology of Byzantium and of Bulgaria.³¹⁰ It is from this point of reference that also the *new (re-new-ing)* naming of Delian and Constantine Bodin with the name *Peter* should be viewed: it gave the two insurgent leaders the aura of *renovators* of the Bulgarian Tsardom, which, as has already been said numerous times, had a ‘salvational mission’ before the *End of Times*. Here, we have to agree with Ivan Biliarsky yet again, that the connection between the cult of Tsar Petur with the subsequent rulers that carried

307 Ivanov, 2012, 99.

308 Biliarsky 2004, 34–35.

309 Such is the opinion, for instance, of Zlatarski 1971/II, 142, against which is Biliarsky 2004, 34.

310 See further details in Biliarsky 2004, 25–27, 30–35; for a general overview of the Christian archetype of renovation of the kingdom, i.e. Constantine’s paradigm, see Biliarsky 2011, 140–142, and in a Bulgarian context: Biliarsky 2013, 179–181.

the same name was above all “religious and not dynastic”,³¹¹ i.e. it was a connection on the level of royal ideology and salvational expectations.

At the very end of the historical period in question, the name *Peter* makes its appearance in Bulgaria once more, in the ‘royal’ and ‘renewing/renovating’ sense. This was, of course, the name change of the older of the brothers from the Asenid dynasty (Asenevtsi), Theodor, who became *Petur* upon his ascending the Bulgarian throne immediately after the uprising against the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185–1195; 1203–1204) in 1185.³¹² The coronation of the eldest brother could be seen as *renovatio imperii* (*renovation of the Tsardom*).³¹³

And so, firstly with their symbolic resources, Boris-Michael as the Baptizer, and *Petur* as the first legitimately recognized by Byzantium ‘tsar of the Bulgarians’, who, according to the Bulgarian doctrine, ruled over the western part of the *Oecumene* (the oft-mentioned *Dysis*) of the otherwise unified—on a conceptual level of thought—Christian Empire, and, secondly, with the fact that both were saint-tsars in the eyes of the Bulgarians in the 11th–12th centuries,³¹⁴ these two rulers probably seemed to be best-suited for legitimizing the notion of the Bulgarians’ chosenness as a people with a mission before Judgment Day.

In the years of hardships following the fall of the Bulgarian Tsardom in 1018, the names of these two rulers, as well as the specific memory of their deeds, were particularly needed by the scholarly people in the Bulgarian lands in their symbolic dimensions. At least until the end of the 12th century (the death of Tsar *Petur*/Theodor from the Asenid dynasty, in 1197), they helped assert the notion of the heavenly (divine) protection of the Bulgarians who, even after losing their tsardom in 1018, remained divinely sanctified, and, therefore, a people with a particular mission.

Both *Michael* and *Peter* were perceived as symbolic names, borne by and indicating ‘ideal tsars’, with *Michael* in particular also being seen as an ‘eschatological’ name, related to both Rome,³¹⁵ and the *salvation*. Thanks to the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic texts and the *Interpretation of Daniel* in

311 Biliarsky 2004, 34.

312 Popruzhenko 1928, 77; Polyviannyi 2013, 141.

313 See a description of the coronation in Nicetas Choniates 1975, 371 ff.; Ivan Bozhilov is especially keen on the term *re-novatio imperii*: see *Istoriia na Bulgariia* 1999/1, 425–429 ff.; see also Biliarsky 2004, 35.

314 As has already been pointed out, the question of the dating of Boris-Michael’s canonization remains open; see especially Biliarsky 2004, 31, who rightly notes that in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* only Tsar *Petur* is described as a saint.

315 For some motifs concerning this positioning of Michael, as well as interpretations of the eschatological contexts, see Tăpkova-Zaimova 1997, 1199–1207, esp. 1200–1202, 1204–1206.

particular, after the end of the 11th century, the name of (Tsar) Petur would be permanently associated with the notion that the Bulgarian royal insignia—the crown and the mantle—were lying hidden in a grave (St. Peter the Apostle's?) in “the church of Peter/Peter's church” in Rome; they were laid there “secretly”.³¹⁶ Moreover, the same apocrypha associated them with the name of “Tsar Michael”,³¹⁷ who was described as having ruled “the tsardom for 33 years” and as going from the Sun City (*Slunchev grad*) namely towards Rome (with “only a sword” in hand, *cf.* the motif of handing over the sword—to the Western Church—which was carried by Boris-Michael when he suppressed the revolt of the boilades against the conversion to Christianity in 866), after God had sent an angel to awaken him (*cf.* the motif of the ‘sleeping hero or king!’). His entry into Rome would be opposed by local people, who would think him a “deceiver”, but he would “hit the copper threshing-ground” and “enter the city.” Further on, the *Interpretation* shows “Tsar Michael” attacked by the Romans, struck and lying “three days dead” (*cf.* the motif of the sleep=motif of the dead man who sleeps), and only then would he “revive” and would go to the abovesaid “Peter's church”, where the crown and mantle were hidden. And the grave would “open by God's will” (*cf.* the aforementioned opening of the tomb of Charlemagne, albeit done on order of the ‘western’ emperor, Otto III), to allow this same Tsar Michael to take the supposedly “fake” (*sic* in the original!) mantle and royal scepter and to place the crown on his head.

I allowed myself to make such a detailed retelling of a part of the *Interpretation* of Daniel in order to illustrate to what extent the names and actions of Michael and Petur—both perceived as Bulgarian ‘tsars with a mission’—were directly related to the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism from the times of Byzantine rule. That was the time when there was a real need to present as legitimate both the Bulgarian kingship and the Bulgarians’ chosenness to do ‘work before the *Last Times*’. These two trends are clearly seen and easily recognized in the historical apocalyptic texts, from the use of the following clichés: “finding the True Cross”, “Constantine's paradigm”, “saint-tsar, a tsar saint”, “center of the world” (Rome, Constantinople, Sredets), “the name Michael”, and the like. Through such *imaginings/imaginative cognitions* the unknown Bulgarian authors of these texts actually triggered one of the functions of symbols (royal insignia, personal names, specific *topoi*, etc.): namely, to have a psychological effect on the irrational strata in the thoughts and emotions of

316 See the text in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 125, 135; Petkov 2008, 204–205; see also Polyviannyi 2013, 144.

317 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 125, 135; Petkov 2008, 204–205.

a person, which in turn determines the invisible influence on his/her feelings, perceptions and notions.³¹⁸

And if this 'salvational' expectation is indeed related to the naming, then in the following paragraph I shall try to prove that it also has topographical dimensions, with the latter being both 'horizontal' and 'vertical'.

3.3.3 *The Well, or about the Path to and the Place of Paradise (and Hell?): Bulgarian Visions about the Topography of Salvation*

On the following pages, I shall attempt to analyze and interpret a fragment with a specific (*hierotopic* in essence) meaning in the Bulgarian medieval historical apocalypticism: the so-called 'two-mouth well'/'*studenets*', which, as it appears, is among the typical *topoi* in this kind of texts. It has already been discussed by other Bulgarian scholars, including Todor Mollov and Ancho Kaloianov.³¹⁹ Todor Mollov is inclined to assume that "initially, [the original had contained] 'seven-mouth' well", i.e. the well had marked Hell by encoding it by the number 7, and thus linking it to Pleiadian symbols, but with the path 'downwards' in a vertical projection, i.e. towards Hell.

In the texts that contain this *topos*, namely *Interpretation of Daniel, Vision of Daniel* and *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*, the location of the well is always near *Vitosha Mountain*, the *city* of *Sredets* (present-day Sofia) and its neighborhood *Boiana*, i.e. these *loci*-names mark, as has long been noted by a number of scholars, the notion of the sacral center of the Bulgarian Tsardom (as it was in those times, i.e. during the period following the mid-11th century, when it had already ceased to exist in reality and was only imaginary) and territory. This is further substantiated by the *mountain* (*Vitosha*), always thought as the world 'axis' by pre-modern societies, as well as the etymology of the name *Sredets*,³²⁰ and the name *Boiana*, which can easily be derived from the male name *Boian*, which possessed obvious sacral-magical connotations in steppe Eurasia. It is no coincidence that Ancho Kaloianov directly states in his book "*Starobulgarskoto ezichestvo*" (meaning "*Old Bulgarian Paganism*"), that "the name *Boiana* is a female correlate of *Boian*" and can be viewed "in the context of the shamanic religious experience ...".³²¹ Thus, in this *topos* triad, outlined by the texts, there is an obvious projection of the idea of the horizontal (4, from 'Sredets', i.e. *sreda*, middle) and the vertical (3, from *Vitosha Mountain* and

318 On the link between power and symbols in particular, see Bocharov 1996, 20–22.

319 Mollov 1997, 138, n. 19; Kaloianov 1995, 103, 105, 108; Kaloianov 2000, 78, 201–202; for the original text, see Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova, 1996, 129, 136, 155; Petkov 2008, 202, 205, 207; on images of wells in Byzantine art, see Gavrilović 2010, 201–218.

320 Mollov 1997; Stepanov S.a., 122–129; Stepanov 2007b, 108–118.

321 Kaloianov 2000, 233.

the allusion to the shamanic vertical journey, encoded in the name *Boian(a)*) universal bi-dimensionality, also known as $3 + 4 (= 7)$.

Could, however, this vision be viewed solely as stemming from the oldest layers of the Bulgarian (Bulgar?) pagan folklore? Or should we also try to look for other levels of genetic engagement-and-origin, as well as other ways of interpretation, in order to explain the emergence of such an image in the historical apocalyptic texts, which were essentially Christian and stemming mainly from the Eastern Mediterranean?

The pilgrimage literature in Bulgaria, albeit preserved in texts from a later period than the one in question, appears to be an interesting source for such notions. The same applies for several texts from the period between the 17th and the 18th centuries, originating from the Russian Tsardom and a part of the so-called *zagovory* or *incantations* (also related to the so-called Russian *spiritual* poetry).³²² It is worth recalling that both in the West and in the East, the amount of pilgrim descriptions of the Holy Land and the number of relics brought back from there grew precisely after the 11th century, not without connection to the beginning of the Crusades and the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099. In the Bulgarian lands, numerous steatite icons have been found, as well as other objects related to the Christian cult (e.g. ampoulae and other relics) and the pilgrimage to the Holy Land in particular, stemming both from the 10th–11th and from the 12th–13th centuries. This has been the object of many studies and publications of findings by Konstantin Totev, Liudmila Doncheva-Petkova, Kazimir Popkonstantinov and others.³²³ Whether they were made in the Near East, or were the product of local craftshops from the Balkan-Danube (mainly Byzantine-Bulgarian) region, and to what extent this relates to the contemporary Rus'ian *enkolpia* and other aspects of pilgrimage is a question of greater difficulty that requires a separate study.³²⁴ For this reason

322 See, for instance, Puteshestvie igumena Daniila 1864; Kniga khozhdenii 1984; see also Musin 2009, 231–272; Bibikov 2005, 45–50.

323 With no claim to exhaustiveness, see in general Totev 1986, 56–59; Totev 1990, 48–58; Totev 1994, 226–235; Totev 1992, 123–138; Popkonstantinov 2000, 181–187; Popkonstantinov 2001, 47–79; Popkonstantinov 2002, 283–287; on the pilgrimage literature in medieval Bulgaria, see Giurova 1996, 85–114; for the descriptions in Latin, Greek and the Slavic languages from the period between the 11th and the 13th centuries, 162–211; for the Bulgarian pilgrim descriptions from the 14th–15th centuries.

324 On the various views of this subject, see Doncheva-Petkova 1983, 113–124; Doncheva-Petkova 1992, 51–65; Doncheva-Petkova 2005, 184–209; Atanasov 1992, 28–50; Atanasov, Iotov 1990, 86–97; Zalesskaia 1988, 93–104; Korzukhina, Peskova 2003; Petrukhin, Pushkina 2009, 157–168; Murasheva 2009, 169–177; Peskova 2007, 268–279; Peskova 2009, 285–312; for a general overview of the cult of relics of the True Cross, see Frolow 1961 and Frolow 1965. The literature dealing with the phenomenon of pilgrimage is immense—see, for example, studies

I shall not go into detail on this question, especially since it does not have a direct bearing on the research in this book. The above facts undoubtedly suggest that the Bulgarian *literati* were well aware of numerous aspects of the pilgrim reality. Let us recall, in this connection, that precisely the period following the mid-11th to the 13th century saw the rise of the historical apocalyptic literature in the Bulgarian lands.

The Russian texts in particular are filled with sacral *topoi* from the Holy Land. Several of the latter are obviously actual *places*, but there are also those that simply mark the notion of the holiness of the Russian lands, in particular of Kiev and Moscow, or some other city, always highlighting the connection of the specific *topos* to Jerusalem and its holy places in the eyes of all Christians (Zion, Tabor, the Jordan River, etc.). Such a relation between pilgrimage literature, eschatological notions and spiritual poetry on Russian soil has, in fact, long been suggested by Vladimir Sakharov.³²⁵

Some examples of the so-called *zagovory* here would not be superfluous, I think: “On the Goriun’ Mountain, On the Buian Mountain (*sic!!!—cf. the name Boiana in the Bulgarian text*), On the Erdan River, (the Jordan River—*Author’s note*), In forests, in caverns, In the city of Jerusalem, On the holy cypress tree ...” (“*Na gore na Goriune, Na gore na Buiane, Na reke na Erdane, V lesakh v Vertepakh, Vo grade Ierusalime, Na sviatom dereve kiparise ...*”);³²⁶ “On the Ossian Mountain (Zion—*Author’s note*), there stood a stone *kolodiaz’* (*sic!!!, i.e. well*)...” (“*Na Osiianskoi gori, tam stoiav kolodiaz’ kamiannii ...*”);³²⁷ “[Christ] reached the Kievan lands on the mountain of Bethany, [And] gives Grace, The Grace of God will be heralded, And will shine on the Kievan mountains, A joyful occurrence, the elevation of the Cross. We elevate the Cross, We kiss the Christ on it, and bow down to Him” (“*Dostupil strany kievskii na gory Vefanskiia, Blagodat iziavljaet, Izhdut vozsiati, Bozhoi blagodati, Oznaimuet blagodati, na kievskikh gorakh siiati, Radoste nyne iavlentie, kresta vozdvizhenie. Krest vozdvizaem, Na nem Khrista lobyzaem, Emu sia klianiaem*”).³²⁸

Similar examples can also be found among the Belorussian *zagovory*, including the stable *topoi* cypress, “*latyr* stone”, church, sea, river, city, island, etc., all of them related, in one form or another, to Zion.³²⁹ These and similar examples in fact refer to a well-known passage in *Isaiah* 2:3: “For out of Zion

by Pierre Maraval, Cyril Mango, Alice-Mary Talbot, Gary Vikan, Leonid Beliaev, Brigitte Pitarakis, Henry Maguire, et al.

325 Sakharov 1879.

326 Tolstaia 1997, 32.

327 Tolstaia 1997, 33.

328 Fialkova 1997, 36.

329 Iudin 1997, and Iudin 2004, 295–308.

shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem". I would also like to point out that, according to Mikhail Bibikov,³³⁰ Zion began to be called "holy [mountain]" in Russian literature from a slightly later age: from the 16th century onwards. Until then, the epithet "holy" (attached to a *place, city, mountain*, the *Promised Land* in general) in Rus' usually marked Mount Sinai, Bethlehem, Galilee, all of Palestine and, of course, mostly the city of Jerusalem. Against this background, it is worth making at least two important distinctions: 1) that the term 'holy mount' in the Russian (late) medieval texts does not denote either Sinai or Zion, but only Mount Athos, and 2) that despite the glory of Constantinople and its famous relics, which Rus'ian pilgrims were well aware of, as described in their pilgrimage accounts after the 11th century, the concepts 'Holy Land' and 'Holy City' were not used with regard to the Byzantine capital.³³¹

Alongside the abovementioned perceptions and names that were spread among the Rus'ian pilgrims, I would like to add one more significant aspect of this tradition. As Milena Rozhdestvenskaia writes, in the minds of the Russian pilgrims, the land of Palestine was proof of the existence of the earthly Paradise "in the east", *na vostotse*.³³² This well-established in Christianity notion of the location of Paradise was so strong (the Heavenly Jerusalem is Paradise, and the latter is located in the east, see *Genesis* 2:8: "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east") that the Rus' clearly didn't even question their actual geographical position in relation to Palestine, which was not located east of medieval Rus', but in the south. It is important to note, however, that when it comes to the arrangement of the Lord's Paradise, the Old Testamental Jews did not perceive the phrase "Eden, in the east" as denoting some strictly defined place (locality) to the East, but as the East itself: the word *kedem* can be translated as "in front, from the front; earlier" and with the eastern qibla of the old Jews it acquired the meaning of "in the east". Influenced by the Greek translation of the *Septuaginta*, however, the ancient Jewish word *šəmah*, which had a messianic connotation in the Old Testament, in *Jeremiah* (23:5, 33:15) and in *Zechariah* (3:8, 6:12) was translated as *anatoli*, i.e. "east" (it became *oriens* in the *Vulgata*). In this situation, the east itself probably acquired traits of a messianic region, and the Greek word *anatoli*, as it later also happened in Christianity, became one of the names of the Messiah.³³³

330 Bibikov 2005, 49–50.

331 See Bibikov 2005, 46–50.

332 Rozhdestvenskaia 1994, 12.

333 Podosinov 1999, 196–197.

In Old Rus'ian literature, a firmly established tradition was to view the earthly Jerusalem as the place from where the souls of the righteous could most easily journey on to Paradise. Here is an example in this connection. The Venerable Efrosiniia of Polotsk (probably the end of the 12th century, judging by her *Vita*) left the monastery in her city of Polotsk to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Everybody sent her off in accordance with the 'formula' in such cases: they grieved as if she was already at death's door, and also because Efrosiniia was leaving them alone (the *orphans* archetype is not used by chance in the text). This burial formula aims to introduce the reader to the significant part of the storyline: Efrosiniia would breathe her last namely in Jerusalem, in the Promised Land, but not before thrice bowing before the Holy Sepulcher. The hagiographer depicted this situation through the words of the (soon-to-be) Saint Efrosiniia, who sent a prayer to God to receive her spirit "in Your holy city of Jerusalem and to carry me to Your Upper Jerusalem". Thus, it becomes clear to the reader that for her (actually, for all the righteous people who would gain the halo of sanctity), the only place from which Paradise could be reached (the Heavenly/Upper Jerusalem) was Jerusalem on earth.³³⁴ Such notions were typical for Kievan Rus' precisely during the 12th century, for example, in the apocryphal *Journey of Agapius to Paradise* (*Khozhdenie Agapiia v Rai*) or the especially popular *Journey of Hegumen Daniel* (*Khozhdenie igumena Daniila*).³³⁵ Here, especially in *Tale of Our Father Agapius* (*Skazanie ottsa nashego Agapiia*), as has been already said, clearly visible is the notion, typical for Kievan Rus', that Paradise is "in the east": father Agapius journeyed from his monastery "to the east", i.e. to the place where Paradise was located. Hegumen Daniel also started on a journey to the Holy Land.³³⁶ Thus, the *journey* and the *path*, or the movement in a particular direction were important starting points in the minds of the premodern people and the Christians in particular, who never forgot the special saying in St. John's *Revelation*, the well-known words of God: "I am the way, and the truth, and life" (John 14:6).

We also cannot ignore another important detail of the apocryphal *Tale of Agapius*, which has an undeniable connection to other similar *topoi* in historical apocalypticism (in various *Exegeses* and *Visions*, including the Bulgarian ones, which are also discussed in this chapter): Agapius awakens from sleep

334 Rozhdestvenskaia 1998, 124–125; on various early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts dealing with journeys to Paradise, see Himmelfarb 1993.

335 See their editions in: *Pamiatniki literatury* 1980, 25–115; Hegumen Daniel; Uspenskii sbornik 1971, 466–473: "Skazanie ottsa nashego Agapiia" (*Tale of Our Father Agapius*); on the journey of Hegumen Daniel in particular, and the symbolic meaning included in this text, see Garzaniti 1991; Garzaniti 1995, 22–37.

336 Rozhdestvenskaia 1998, 126–127.

(*sic*) only to find out that he is on an unknown island.³³⁷ And another significant aspect with regard to the analysis that shall follow below, based on comparisons with some *topoi* of ancient origins: the apocryphal *Vita* of Macarius the Roman³³⁸ and the *Tale of Our Father Agapius* both contain coinciding *topoi*. This indicates that the hagiographic genre and the genre of descriptions of pilgrim journeys to the Holy Land contain a number of *common places*,³³⁹ which in turn suggests the existence of common ideas regarding the locations of Paradise and the Heavenly Jerusalem, built by similar and even identical verbal formulas.³⁴⁰ With the latter, the abundance of light metaphors (brilliance, radiance), a fragrant scent (frankincense), flower and color imagery, as well as heavenly singing and the like is quite striking. And this imagery is precisely the imagery of Paradise and the Heavenly Jerusalem: as a light, a garden, a harmony of sounds and complete tranquility, in which the souls of the righteous reside.

The *Journey of Hegumen Daniel* contains descriptions of the holy places in the Promised Land that the hegumen had personally visited, many of which he saw thanks to a pre-planned route of his, following in the footsteps of Old Testament prophets, kings and especially Christ Himself (the Jordan River, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the oak of Mamre, Capernaum, Hebron, Emmaus, Jaffa, Sea of Tiberias, Tabor, Nazareth, etc.). Alongside those descriptions, however, is not only a well-defined hierarchy of the *holy places*, but also a clear correlation between the past *sacred history* of the Old Testament and his own contemporary history; he seems to view the latter through the prism of the battle between *good* and *evil*, which intensified in anticipation of the advent of Antichrist and the Last Judgment.³⁴¹ It is noteworthy that Hegumen Daniel constantly speaks with fear and expresses his hostility towards the 'Saracens', only once in his narrative mentioning a peaceful cohabitation between Christians and Muslims in a village in Palestine.³⁴² At the same time, Daniel talks about the Crusaders—and even the Latin clergy—with respect, even though for him, the true guardians of the holy places in the Promised Land, according to the will of God, were the Eastern churches.³⁴³

337 Rozhdestvenskaia 1998, 128.

338 For further details on him and the *topoi* there, see Lozanova-Stancheva 2010.

339 Rozhdestvenskaia 1998, 129.

340 Specifically on the perceptions about Paradise—both regarding its location and state—in the Old Bulgarian hymnography, see Koicheva 2013.

341 Garzaniti 1995, 26, 27–29, 31.

342 Garzaniti 1995, 31.

343 Garzaniti 1995, 32.

And since the search for Paradise and the long journey towards it, as seen in the various written traditions of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, have been repeatedly discussed here, let us recall that the paradigm of Alexander the Great, which has been properly addressed in Chapter 2, is clearly relevant also in this case. According to legend, Alexander also sought the earthly Paradise precisely in the east, and this notion subsequently influenced the medieval versions of *Romance of Alexander*. This *Romance*—perhaps not coincidentally, given the Crusades in the East—became especially popular among the nobility during the 12th–13th centuries.³⁴⁴ It may well be that some of these illuminated manuscripts detailing Alexander's exploits were read publicly namely before nobles in Western Europe, in Flanders and in Northern France in particular.³⁴⁵ Let us recall once more that in the stories dealing with the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the apocalyptic element is quite explicitly present. Namely, this first 'king of the world' conquered Babylon (the latter city is actively present in apocalyptic legends and writings, and the term 'whore of Babylon' has been used to describe, in an eschatological context, the capital of the Roman Empire, one of the four 'world empires' before the *End of Times*) and, as has already been said many times in this book, he also shut out the 'unclean peoples Gog and Magog' "behind a wall/gate" beyond the Caucasus.

For the Rus', therefore, embarking on a pilgrim journey towards the Promised Land paradoxically meant going in both a southern and an eastern direction.³⁴⁶ If I were to paraphrase here a well-known eloquent expression, I would say that for the educated Christians in the Rus'ian lands in those times, "the archetype *oblige*", that is, since the Heavenly Paradise is to the East, and Palestine/ancient Israel is the earthly reflection of Paradise, then Palestine *must* be located in the East. And so, once we have revealed the value meaning that the Heavenly Jerusalem held for every Christian in the Middle Ages, it becomes clear yet again that the distortion of the actual geography done by the people of that age should no longer seem puzzling.

In some of these *zagovory*, the focus is placed on the universal vertical axis (cypress, throne of gold, pillar, church), while in others it is on the horizontal axis (the earth embankment around the home, usually called *tyñ* in Russian

344 A recent study of the visual aspect of this *Romance* in West European manuscripts mainly stemming from France can be found in Cruse 2011, and esp. ch. 4: on the popularity of the legends about Alexander's deeds, perfectly suited to the West Europeans' unceasing passion for restoring Christian sovereignty over the Promised Land even after the fall of Acra in 1291.

345 As claimed by, for instance, Cruse 2011, 24, regarding *MS Bodley 264*.

346 The various aspects of the perception of Paradise over the centuries have been the subject of countless studies—in general, see Sokolov 2011; Delumeau 2012–2013.

and often perceived as iron-made, i.e. as a kind of fortress).³⁴⁷ In this connection, it wouldn't be superfluous to recall that the notion of the sacredness of Mount Zion and its relation to the Rila Mountain in Bulgaria which had sheltered the renowned St. John of Rila († 946) can be seen explicitly stated in medieval Bulgarian written documents as early as the end of the 10th century.³⁴⁸

In the Bulgarian *Interpretation of Daniel*, alongside the many other passages can be found the following interesting text: "And all the prisoners shall return to Strumitsa, while others to Glavinitsa, because this land is called *the mother of all lands*" (italics mine—*Author's note*).³⁴⁹ Similar and even identical definitions can also be found in the *zagovory*, for example "the city of Jerusalem, father of all cities ..." (*Erusalim grad—vsem gradam otets ...*), or "Jerusalem City, mother of all cities. Why is Jerusalem City the mother of all cities? Jerusalem City is in the center of the earth. In the center, with the navel of the world in it" (*Iorasolim-gorod gorodam mati. Pochemy zhe Iorasolim-gorod gorodam mati? Iorasolim-gorod posredi zemli. Posredi zemli, v nem pup zemli*).³⁵⁰

The notion of 'the center of the world' as the *omphalos/umbo/Nabel* and such, i.e. as a 'navel', is very ancient and has long been analyzed by scholars in its relation to the birth of man and the emergence of the Universe,³⁵¹ which, by definition, all occurred in the 'center'/'middle'. For this reason, we shall not go into further detail here. It is more important to point out that, besides Sredets and its surroundings, the Bulgarians who compiled this and similar apocalyptic texts, perceived Strumitsa and Glavinitsa as the 'center' of *their own* universe, a kind of Promised Land. Recently, Todor Mollov expressed a hypothesis, which is not devoid of logic: namely, he suggests viewing Glavinitsa through the name *Kutmichevitsa*, also known from other sources, by deriving it from the Turkic *qut*. The latter has a wide range of meanings, as has already been demonstrated above,³⁵² but the important thing in this case is that the ancient Turks linked the notion of the 'germ', 'life force', and such (all different meanings of *qut*) with their sacred mountain/land/Homeland, called Ötüken.³⁵³

The *Sermon on the Holy Places in Jerusalem*, included in the so-called *Bdin Collection* from the 1360s, also contains the notion-and-name 'navel of the world', as well as many rocks, sacred for Christianity and its early history, Mount

347 Toporov 2004, 70–73.

348 Kaloianov 2009, 37–45.

349 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 126, 136; Petkov 2008, 205.

350 Tolstaia 1997, 31. Cf. also Ez. 5:5: "Thus says the Lord God: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the *center* (italics mine—*Author's note*) of the nations, with countries all around her".

351 The literature on this problem is quite vast: see, for instance, Toporov 2004, 90–92.

352 For further details, see Golden 1992; Stepanov 2001, 1–19 with cited literature.

353 See Mollov 1997, 212–214.

Zion, the Jordan River, and also caves, the so-called star well, etc.³⁵⁴ It also corresponds to the descriptions of the Holy Places (and the respective *topoi* there) given by Arsenios of Thessaloniki and Constantine of Kostenets.³⁵⁵ These sacred *loci* are emblematic and subsequently became paradigmatic for every Promised Land that emerged later on, be it Sredets, Strumitsa-Glavinitza, Kiev, Belgrade, Moscow or Mtskheta, all of them perceived as the ‘New Jerusalem’,³⁵⁶ i.e. as a ‘new center’ (of the Universe and the nations, if we were to recall Ez. 5:5).

At the same time, however, alongside the older perceptions/images of the well, the cypress, the rock, etc., that stemmed from pagan times, the early saint fathers of the Church also gave new, Christian interpretations to these symbols. For example, St. Gregory of Nyssa viewed the cypress as a symbol of beneficence “of the visible seemliness” and order, while St. Basil the Great saw the well as a symbol of the pious spiritual man.³⁵⁷

In the case of the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic writings, though, it is difficult to say with absolute certainty whether the notions about the mentioned *topoi* refer to pagan times,³⁵⁸ or to the high theological Christian thought of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. It may well be that they also contain a contamination of the *old* pagan times with the *new* Christian ones, an often-seen phenomenon in the Middle Ages.

In this connection, of particular interest is the recently published book by Vania Lozanova-Stancheva, “East of Eden” (*Na iztok ot Raia*),³⁵⁹ where the author interprets symbols from “the geography of the Afterlife”, found as *topoi* there. Having analyzed certain aspects from *Romance of Alexander* and the *Vita* of the aforementioned Macarius the Roman, Vania Lozanova-Stancheva states the following: there are many reasons to argue that the broad cultural area of the Eastern Mediterranean harbored “myth-ritual primary sources [...] that lasted throughout the whole Antiquity and that interpreted similar *eschatological perceptions* (italics mine—*Author’s note*); they were quite similar if not identical to the Orphic tablets alluded by the texts”.³⁶⁰ Indeed, these

354 Stara bulgarska literatura 1992, 155–158.

355 Stara bulgarska literatura 1992, 159–162.

356 See examples in Belova and Petrukhin 2008, 88–96; Belova and Petrukhin 2007, 58–59; Krymskii 1995, 284–286; Tolstaia 1997, 31–32; Bondzholov 2005, 5; Oikonomides 1980–81, 239–246; Mollov 1997, 198; Majeska 1999, 118–128; Erdeljan 2006, 97–110.

357 For further information on these and other symbols, see Bychkov 1999, 349–373, esp. 359.

358 In this regard, see the thoughts of Ancho Kaloianov about realia in the Bulgarian *Tale of the Iron Cross*: Kaloianov, Spasova, Mollov 2007, 15–36 and esp. 22–23, 36, which deal with notions of the *northern lands, the well, the pillar, etc.*

359 Lozanova-Stancheva 2010.

360 Lozanova-Stancheva 2010, 65.

tablets, like some later Christian writings, speak of (ever-flowing) springs and a lake, as well as of a white cypress: all markers showing the way for those going into the Lower World, or Hell, with the goal to be initiated into the secrets of eternal life. Precisely such *signs* can be found in the Russian *zagovory* that appeared much later, as has already been pointed out.

Vania Lozanova-Stancheva is inclined to view “the Orphic katabatic texts” as the foundation—and one of the first building blocks—of Greek apocalyptic literature.³⁶¹ Could these two sources, mentioned in Orphism and associated with the initiation of the *mystai*, which was perceived by definition as achieved by going underground into some kind of ‘center’, be somehow linked to the above-mentioned *topos* of the ‘two-mouth’ well? It is also worth recalling the fact that all these secret mystery cults from Antiquity that later appeared also in the Middle Ages, reflected through corresponding Christian (mostly Gnostic in their origins) transformations, dealt with the issue of ‘the water of life/living water’, which, as is well known, is associated with a lake and/or spring and immortality. For instance, a mosaic from Thessaloniki (in the Church of Hosios David of the Latomos Monastery near Thessaloniki, 5th century) contains an interesting theophany, which has its parallels in the Bachkovo ossuary (Southern Bulgaria) and on the double-sided icon from the Poganovo Monastery (14th century) with the inscription “Miracle in Latomos”. It depicts the prophets Ezekiel and Habakkuk. Both the mosaic from Thessaloniki and the above-mentioned icon also contain a depiction of Jesus Christ, shown seated under the rainbow; the symbols of the Evangelists are seen emerging from its radiance, with the spring with living water situated under the seated Christ. This image actually seeks to instill the view that through the Word of God—just like water and food for the believers—shall come salvation.³⁶²

The well, too, can be perceived to a large extent as such a source of living water and a way not only *downwards*, towards Hell,³⁶³ but also towards Paradise. By no mere coincidence, the latter was placed by the unknown Bulgarian apocalyptic writers near Sredets, i.e. ‘in the center’, where one makes a *katabatic* descent into the Afterlife to achieve immortality and thus to close the cycle from birth to resurrection, as promised to Christians at *the End of Times* and on Judgment Day. Also not by chance, it was there, near Sredets,

361 Lozanova-Stancheva 2010, 184.

362 For more details, see Mavrodinova 1999, 170–172.

363 On these journeys to Hell in the Jewish and Christian literary traditions, see in general Himmelfarb 1983; on the iconography regarding Jesus Christ’s ‘Anastasis’ see, in general, Kartsonis 1986.

Boiana and Mount Vitosha, where this ‘two-door *studenets* (spring)’³⁶⁴ was located, and where the Last Tsar would do battle with the *arch*-enemy of the Christians before the Second Coming of Christ, the ‘Ishmaelites’.

In the *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah about the Future Times and about the Kings ...*, the well is described as ‘two-mouth’,³⁶⁵ and in *Vision of Daniel* it is a ‘two-mouth springwell’ (Bulg. *kladez dvoust*).³⁶⁶ The emphasis on the phrase ‘with two doors’ implies knowledge of the Christian idea of the two doors of Paradise: one as an entrance and, accordingly, one as an exit, one of divine humility and the other of perfect love; they are naturally interpreted solely in the spiritual and mystical realm. Also, St. John Climacus said that humility of mind was the door to the Kingdom of Heaven.³⁶⁷ According to Christian beliefs, the exit from Paradise is quite expectedly in the east, while the entrance is from the west.³⁶⁸

Such a battle should take place by definition in the ‘center’ where the *genesis* (birth) is and where the *end* (resurrection) of the people, in particular, the Bulgarians as a ‘chosen people’ with a ‘chosen tsardom’, would be. It is interesting to note here the accounts from Jerusalem of monks who knew the local places through which one could reach Hell,³⁶⁹ as well as the widespread view among the worshipers in Jerusalem that those who died in this most holy city could hope to go straight to Paradise.³⁷⁰ Such legends and tales undoubtedly allude to the existence of ancient notions in the region regarding the ‘opening *upwards*’ and ‘journeying *downwards*’, that were later appropriated by the Christians in connection with the ideas regarding the Salvation, and Paradise and the Heavenly Kingdom.

The archetype of the ‘well of the abyss’ is, quite understandably in this context, paramount to our attempts for an analysis. It can be found in the writings of none other than St. John, in his *Book of Revelation* (Rev. 9:1–3), in connection with the so-called fifth star and the permission it receives from God: to open (*sic*) with the given key (*cf.* here the keys from the gates of Paradise,

364 See the original text in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 125; from *Interpretation of Daniel*.

365 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 150; Petkov 2008, 207.

366 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 119; Petkov 2008, 202.

367 See Lestvitsa 1995, 174.

368 With regard to these notions: on the geographical directions, doors, etc., see Kim 2003, 65–67, 89–90, 96–97, 104–105, 108–109, 122–125, 142–149, in addition, see here the references to studies by Aleksandr Podosinov and Leonid Chekin, whose analysis of the cartographic traditions of Antiquity and the Middle Ages indicates the perceived location of Paradise.

369 Giurova 1996, 9.

370 Giurova 1996, 19.

held by St. Peter) the pit of the abyss, i.e. the gates of Hell, to let out the locusts. The allusions with *gates* and *key/opening* to enter a space that is by presumption hidden, i.e. sacred, taboo, cannot be regarded here as coincidental, since these spaces are generally places of theophanies and as such are marked by and shrouded in secret. The latter can be reached by some, but only the *chosen ones* can pass *beyond*. Something strikingly similar can be found in St. John's *Revelation*: that only several dozen thousands out of all humankind could hope to achieve this *chosenness* (i.e. salvation) on Judgment Day.³⁷¹ Also not to be missed is the well-known association of the *key* with *power*: those who had a key, had power, so to speak, since the key in the Old Testament was perceived as a symbol of authority.³⁷²

I would also like to bring up here a very significant observation for our topic, made by Georgi Gerov regarding the way *water* was perceived as a 'boundary' by premodern people. It seems pointless to challenge the thesis that "in medieval literature, the opposition between righteousness/unrighteousness, purity/sin, knowledge/ignorance of the truth was also represented by the code of the water stream".³⁷³ If we were to add to this vision the following words of the prophet Isaiah himself: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of *salvation*" (italics mine—*Author's note*) (Is. 12:3), then we can clearly see the archetypal connection between water and not only purity in the literal and figurative sense of the word, not only knowledge, but also the matter of salvation, which is of special significance for the topic at hand.

The notion of the *beginning* and the *end* as duplicating the archetype of the Promised Land (with important markers like Jerusalem, the Jordan River, Zion, Tabor, etc.) in the Bulgarian lands has also been explicitly stated in a later apocalyptic text, *Vision of Isaiah*, from the Collection of Dragol. The events described there date from the period after 1261 and before the 1280s, as has already been noted in the present study.³⁷⁴ It expressly states the following: "They will come to the river, called 'the hidden paradise'; this river flows through 'the land of Israel, called Mezina Land.'" ³⁷⁵ Let us recall, once again, that firstly, Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova and Anisava Miltenova interpret 'Mezina Land' through the prism of *Moesia*, i.e. the present-day Bulgarian lands north of the Stara Planina mountain range, seen as an analogue to 'Moses' Land'.³⁷⁶

371 On views regarding Judgment Day, death, the Heavens and Hell, as reflected in some Byzantine monuments, see Wortley 2001, 53–69.

372 Apokalipsis v uchenii drevnego Khristianstva 2010, 86.

373 Gerov 2002, 35.

374 Miltenova 1991, 135–144; Miltenova 1992, 77–81; Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 230.

375 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 232, 237; Petkov 2008, 528.

376 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 229 and n. 9 on p. 239.

Secondly, a while ago Todor Mollov suggested another possible interpretation, based on folklore data.³⁷⁷ And thirdly, the author of this book associates 'Mezina Land' with the Greek word *mesos*, "center", "middle", which is to say that the Bulgarian Tsardom is presented in the text as 'chosen' and located in the 'center' of the world.³⁷⁸

A bit further on in the same text, the eschatological *End of Times* is expectantly also linked to Mezina Land: "After you see the end of the Tsardom in Mezina Land, no other tsar shall come from the same origin".³⁷⁹ A logical addition to the cited passages on the *beginning* and the *end* is a fragment from the apocalyptic text *Tale of the Prophet Isaiah*. It also contains the *topos* of the 'two-mouth well'. The eschatological *end* is depicted thus: "The only thing remaining shall be the land from which the Jordan River flows".³⁸⁰ Here, the Jordan River is the marker *par excellence* of the 'Land of Israel', and this cannot be surprising in the context of a prophetic text from the Old Testament, which is exceptionally important for our study, and in which the Lord will bury Gog and all his multitude (*sic*) in a valley in the Land of Israel (Ez. 39:11–13).

Allusions to the *centrality* of Jerusalem and its exceptional role in the salvation of the peoples can also be found in other parts of the Bible, but here I shall mention only those that are related to the emblematic *Book of Revelation* of St. John (Rev. 21:2, 10–27). This Book of the Bible creates the renowned 'fourth' visual image of the City with its twelve gates, three for each of the four world directions, with walls of jasper, its foundations adorned with various precious stones, and so forth. In the same book, but in the following chapter 22 (Rev. 22:1–2), is another important passage that refers to *topoi* known from various subsequent apocalyptic descriptions, one example of which is the clear river "of the water of life" (*italics mine—Author's note*), bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb", on either side of which "stood a tree of life". These images have undoubtedly been projected onto certain parts of the Bulgarian lands, thus supplying them with a symbolic resource, to make them seem 'God-chosen', 'central', i.e. duplicating the Promised Land and even Paradise. In truth, the use of easily recognizable *loci* from the sacred geography of the Holy Lands in similar texts was a widespread practice in the Middle Ages that was typical not only for the Bulgarians.

377 Mollov 1997, 59, 65–69.

378 Stepanov S.a., 126–128.

379 Täpkova-Zaimova, Miltenova 1996, 233, 238; Petkov 2008, 529.

380 Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 152, 157.

The steadfastness of the 'water of life' or 'tree of life' *topoi* in Christian eschatology can also be backed with iconographic data, such as the Latin iconographic type of the Heavenly Jerusalem. It is especially well represented in the frescoes of the Abbey of San Pietro al Monte (Civate, late 11th century), as if directly following the description of St. John's *Revelation*: at the center of the composition is Christ, depicted sitting on a sphere, by His feet is the Lamb and the river of life "flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1), and on the sides are the trees of life.³⁸¹ And if in this aspect Western iconography strives to follow the literal text of the *Revelation* as closely as possible, the iconography of the East (which is at its base, of course, Byzantine) during its different historical periods has also focused on various elements and *topoi*, known from these and earlier depictions of Paradise and the Heavenly Jerusalem. For instance, miniatures from the Khludov Psalter contain the motif of the doors and the seven steps of the ladder leading to the gates of the heavenly temple (*cf.* Ez. 40:22: "... as [the doors] of the gate that faced toward the east. And by seven steps people would go up to it").³⁸²

In view of the chronological correlation of the apocalyptic texts and the iconographic formulas, the frescoes in Kurbinovo from the end of the 12th century, and in particular the Annunciation scene, seem even more significant. There, the throne of the Holy Mother of God resembles an altar, behind which can be seen a fabled city resembling a church. Especially important is the image of a garden, depicted above the shoulder of the Holy Mother, at the center of which, among the trees, is a vessel; it is assumed that the symbolic image of the Heavenly Jerusalem is in fact an indisruptable link between highly meaningful, sacral notions: the Holy Mother of God—altar—church—holy city—garden of Eden.³⁸³ At the same time, the garden, the trees and the vessel were undoubtedly images-and-notions of Paradise in the eyes of the ancient people from the Mediterranean ethno-cultural region.

In view of the topic regarding the interpretation of *loci* from the Heavenly Jerusalem in Byzantine art, no less interesting are some opening miniatures in manuscripts from the Middle Byzantine era, in particular the one in Gregory of Nazianzus' *Homilies*, from the collection at the Sinai Monastery (Sinai gr. 339, f. 4v), dated to 1136–1155.³⁸⁴ The central temple there resembles a multi-level rotunda, next to which is a basilica, but more important for us are the water

381 Lidov 1994, 15.

382 Lidov 1994, 18.

383 Lidov 1994, 20.

384 Weitzmann and Galavaris, 1990, 141, fig. 472.

sources and gardens depicted at the base of the city, which are reminiscent of Paradise. At the upper end of the composition is the image of the Holy Mother of God, perceived as the first inhabitant of the Heavenly Jerusalem, an incarnation of the idea of the Temple.³⁸⁵ And so, in the end, we cannot disagree with Aleksei Lidov's thesis that the eastern Christian iconographers were attempting to create a poetic symbol-metaphor of the Heavenly Jerusalem. It seemed to combine in an indivisible whole the motifs of the city, the Temple/church, the tower, the heavenly gates, the Garden of Eden, and the Holy Mother. This, however, did not lead to the emergence of a repetitive scheme or to the creation of an iconographic type, which is in fact what differentiates it from the West European Latin iconography and its aspirations for illustrativity.³⁸⁶

Of course, at least at this stage of research, and especially in the absence of specific data in the sources, an unequivocal answer to the above question regarding the overlapping of some notions from Orphism (regarding the *signs* at the *katabasis* in the Afterlife) and the phenomenon of pilgrimage in the Holy Lands (with the respective local sacred *loci*), on the one hand, and the 'two-mouth/two-door well' *topos* found in some Bulgarian apocalyptic works, on the other, is impossible. The absence of any mention of a *lake* in the Bulgarian apocalyptic texts will keep us alert to a possible search for a direct, genetic link with Orphism. The same can also be said regarding the absence of a *cypress* (which is an important structural element both in the *zagovory*, and in Orphism) in Bulgarian apocalypticism. The cypress, the oak and the date palm are well-known images of the 'world tree'/*arbor mundi*, in the sense of an organic combination of eternal youth and eternal revival, i.e. eternal life.³⁸⁷ *Arbor mundi* has also been substituted with the images of a ladder, a labrys, a pillar, gate-doors (*sic*), a statue, a vase, i.e. vessel (*sic*), etc.³⁸⁸ At the same time, the descent into the Afterlife (represented by the 'two-door well' *topos*) and the emphasis on two entrances/doors leave no doubts as to potential reverberations from the ancient concepts of initiation and allusions to Paradise, from where also the allusions of eternal life originate. The ambivalence and tension between *descending down*, into the *Afterlife*, and *Paradise* in this case are only apparent. It is hardly a coincidence that Vladimir Toporov points out the interesting and seemingly strange *case* of Zeus Chthonios (literally "of the underworld"), who was revered in Corinth,³⁸⁹ emphasizing how Zeus the Thunderer

385 Lidov 1994, 21–22.

386 Lidov 1994, 22.

387 For further details, see Toporov 1999, 183–213 and esp. 184–185, 192.

388 Toporov 1999, 185.

389 *Hes. Opp.* 465; *Hom. II. IX*, 457; *Paus. II*, 2.

simultaneously belonged to both the luminous sky and the dark chthonic element.³⁹⁰ Moreover, the residence of a king/emperor underground, hidden in his subterranean castle, is evidenced in an interesting legend about Emperor Friedrich I Barbarossa. His deeds during the second half of the 12th century, with their undeniably 'salvational' for Christianity dimensions (especially in view of his leading the knights of the Third Crusade in 1189), have already been discussed in this book. According to this legend, the *ruler-and-savior* would emerge to the surface of the earth one day from his subterranean (*sic*) castle.³⁹¹ Staying in a *state of sleep* or *underground* is an ancient realia associated with initiations, as well as with transformations from one state to another; most often it is a sign of regency and chosenness, and is consequently in the prerogatives of kings. This is why it is also found in the so-called last (pre-schatological) king, known as a Christian 'archetype' after Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara: 'the last basileus/king/emperor' would rise from his grave, as if awakening from a deep sleep, to lead his 'chosen people' against the invaders of the Promised Land. Before the *End of Times*, as has been already said many times here, the same basileus/king/emperor would have to go to Golgotha and leave his crown there before breathing his last. Therefore, the movement upwards (Golgotha) from below (sleep, falling asleep or underground castle = death, dead) archetypically implies the possibility of a movement in the opposite direction as well, which was by definition in the abilities and capabilities of kings (in Antiquity, the latter often also had supreme priestly powers, and the priests were given such abilities by presumption, according to the perceptions of a number of ancient and medieval ethnicities).

Given the specifics of the texts mentioning the two-mouth well/'*studentets* with two doors' and their relation to apocalypticism, such a possibility of a contamination between notions of a different nature (and not only stemming from Bulgar(ian) folklore and world/mythological views, as some scholars believe) and various origins should not be immediately rejected. On the contrary, one should expect similar contaminations of layers of information (though not always completely clear and varied in their genesis), containing various images, symbols and markers of sanctity, chosenness, and the like, and found in different combinations as a result of all sorts of transformations, interpolations and reinterpretations also in folklore, in particular in legends and tales, as well as in written Christian texts with paradigmatic meaning and their 'derivatives', etc.

390 Toporov 1999, n. 18 on p. 207.

391 Tăpkova-Zaimova 2004, 464–466.

3.3.4 *The Giants: Once Again about the Beginning and the End (of Space and Time, and of Tsardom as Well)*

In medieval Europe, regardless of people's beliefs, be they pagan, Christian or Muslim, a common legend existed of the giant/colossal people inhabiting the extreme North. They were usually located beyond the space and boundaries of civilization, seen as the world of the People of the Book, i.e. the Christians, Muslims and, of course, the Jews. This is the world that was associated by presumption with the Mediterranean and its civilizational achievements. The latter, as is well known, have been recorded for the generations also in written form, in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and in the Quran. A necessary addition to them, however, should also be the symbolic heritage of Alexander the Great, namely regarding Alexander III of Macedonia in his role as a conqueror and a builder of worlds. This specific *space*, with its deep symbolic significance, has been constantly exploited in the above-said direction at least from the 3rd century AD onwards.³⁹² More specifically, it is the so-called legend or *Romance* of Alexander the Great (also known as the *Alexander Romance*), which has also been mentioned in this study. It contains a number of storylines and details associating the most remote peoples of the Northern Hemisphere with the biblical 'unclean peoples' Gog and Magog (known in the Islamic tradition as Yajuj and Majuj).

In view of the above, in the following paragraph I will attempt to present some important details that suggest the existence of common matrices, and also some differences in the interpretation of the giants motif among the Volga Bulgars and the Danube Bulgarians, and in some sagas and legends of the northern peoples of Europe in the Middle Ages.

Naturally, it is necessary to specify at the outset that this issue has long been studied by scholars, as the *giants* motif is among the so-called mythological *universalialia*,³⁹³ so it is difficult at present to draw any completely new conclusions unless a new text is found, containing similar or entirely new information. Therefore, the aim here would rather be to refine some details in the direction of marking the *beginning* and the *end* by yet another term, known from texts concerning the two medieval Bulgarian states. The first one, Danube Bulgaria, embraced Christianity in the 860s, while the other, situated on the banks of the Volga and Kama Rivers, converted to Islam after the 920s. In addition, I would

392 See Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010.

393 On this see, for instance, Meletinskii 1976, 230; Levinton 1987, 228.

also like to direct the reader's attention to some interesting parallels in the notions regarding giants among the peoples of Scandinavia.³⁹⁴

The following analysis will focus on several authors from the Islamic world, namely, Ibn Al-Faqih, Ibn Fadlan and Al-Garnati, who all wrote between the 9th and the 12th centuries; with the selected accounts understandably concerning Volga Bulgaria.³⁹⁵ An addition to them is the long-commented text from the world of Christian Danube Bulgaria, the prophecy by Isaiah known in scientific circles as the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, which mentions 'giants' and 'violators'.

These and similar legends are actually based on typical, and very ancient in their origins, matrices that have survived through the millennia and can be found not only in the Middle Ages, but also—in a modified form—during the New Age, and even today, including in Bulgaria.³⁹⁶ I therefore feel that it would be of interest to present in a comparative way some of the apparent similarities, but also the differences in this particular interpretation of the above-said motif.

It is necessary to point out from the very outset that premodern men had the tendency to describe *remoteness* with deliberate hypertrophy or distortion. It is for this reason that, up until the New Age, distant ethnic groups were most often presented as monsters or half-men.³⁹⁷ Thus, *farness* was used as a tool for the creation of a *counter-image*, in terms of self-identification, with the most distant peoples marked as completely different from 'us', as the 'absolute *Other*'. The latter is a long-established theory in anthropology, and to this day no one has succeeded in challenging its validity.

What is the origin of the above-mentioned motif of the giants? As has been said, this motif is a common legacy of the so-called Abrahamic religions of the eastern part of the Mediterranean and can naturally be found first of all in the fundamental text of these religions, the Old Testament. Thus, *Genesis* 6:4 says that the first of God's creations on earth were giants (*Nephilim*), men of gigantic stature, who, because of their pride and defiance of the Lord, were destroyed

394 On them, see Mel'nikova 1986, 177–179; Mel'nikova 2001, 78, 285; Glazyrina 2002, 89–90; Kalinina 2005, 98–100.

395 See Kovalevskii 1956, 60, 138–139; Puteshestvie 1971, 42–44, 58–61; Davletshin 1991, 63; Izmailov 2000, 100; Stepanov 2002, 131–139; Kalinina 2005, 91–98.

396 See folkloric data from the territories of the western part of the former USSR in Belova 2000, 47–57; Belova 2003, 638–648; on the same issues regarding the present-day Bulgarian lands after the 16th century, see, for instance, Nemski i avstrijski putepisi 1979, 365–384; Irechek 1974, 185, 489, 672 etc.; Iliev 1890, 179–205; Iliev 1891, 231–256.

397 McCartney 1941, 390–394; Friedman 1981; Romm 1992.

by Him. Earlier (Gen. 6:3), it is mentioned, that their “days” were numbered by God to “120 years”. The same book (6:7–22) recounts the well-known story of Noah and the preservation of earth’s life after the flood, which was supposed to destroy those same huge people, called in the Bible the “mighty men who were of old, the men of renown”.

The myth of the primordial giant, however, can also be found among the ancient Aryans, for example, in the *Rigveda*: from his body came forth the people, the animals, as well as the celestial bodies, some deities, etc., and from his head came the Sky.³⁹⁸ In this same celestial connection, let us recall another very ancient idea: of the mountain peaks that touched the Sky. Seen through this very prism, the notion of the ‘mountains of giants’, spread among some of the Slavic-speaking peoples, like the modern Belarusians, does not seem surprising at all.³⁹⁹ In Talysh legends, the tombs (burial mounds) were presented as the work of giant strongmen,⁴⁰⁰ just as people in some Bulgarian regions also believed. Such and similar notions can also be found among the Celts and the Germans, etc., which makes them actual *universalia*.

3.3.4.1 The Bulgarian *Christian* Case from the End of the 11th–Beginning of the 12th Century

The *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* also talks of *ispolini*, i.e. giants, with the editors of the text, Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova, identifying them in a special note as the pagan Rus,⁴⁰¹ who attacked the Bulgarian Tsardom in 968–970 under the leadership of their konung Sviatoslav, and thus became the reason for the fall of its eastern half under Byzantine rule in 971. Apart from the term *ispolini*, these people were also called ‘violators’ (“violators like giants”). One more thing that was divulged regarding their appearance in the lands of the Christian (by default Bulgarian) Tsardom: they came from beyond the sea,⁴⁰² i.e. they had passed a sort of barrier, in this case a water obstacle. This last fact draws attention to the archetypal notions of the water or mountain barrier and/or obstacle separating the world of ‘order’ (later, the Promised Land) from that of ‘chaos’ and violence. Ever since the times of Herodotus, the images of the *steppe* and the *polis* were well known. The steppe, along with the Scythians that inhabited it, was used as a substitute for notions such as those for ‘chaos’ and ‘a lack of civilization’. Meanwhile, the image of the *polis* (and

398 See Eliade 1997, 274–278.

399 Lobach 2012, 28.

400 Neikova 2014.

401 Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 201 and n. 30; also see Petkov 2008, 197.

402 Täpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 201—“by sea”.

the democratic organization of the Hellenes living in it) was synonymous to 'order' and 'democracy'. These images were well known in the eastern part of the Mediterranean and subsequently became *topoi* in Christianity.

The interesting thing in this text is actually something else: at the very end of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, the term 'violators' has also been used regarding other invaders in the lands of the Christian Bulgarian Tsardom—the Pechenegs. Their attacks between the 1030s and the 1090s, as already mentioned above, truly devastated the Bulgarian lands, which at that time were already within the borders of the Byzantine Empire. It should, however, be noted that the Pechenegs are not called *ispolini*, 'giants', but 'deceivers' and 'infidels and lawless'. The latter epithet is quite clear: the Pechenegs that lacked 'laws' were modeled after the well-known cliché of the people from the 'Scythian space'. This is actually a historical truth, since during the 10th and the 11th centuries they indeed inhabited the western parts of the Eurasian steppe near the estuary of the Danube. Perhaps the 'infidels' cliché is simply a rhetorical technique used by the unknown Bulgarian author of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*, since it is known that in the 11th century, the Pechenegs in their vast majority were pagans and did not fit into the world of Islam, which the Christian apocalypticism traditionally denoted with 'infidels'.

The above-mentioned attacks on the Bulgarian Christian Tsardom (by the Rus' and the Pechenegs) were executed during two important—with regard to eschatology—periods of anticipation of the *End of the world*: before 992 and, respectively, 1092. They ignited expectations for the *End* of the Empire in the Promised Land, which in this case was no other than the Bulgarian Tsardom, albeit lost after 1018. The expectations themselves were well known from paradigmatic texts, such as St. John's *Book of Revelation*, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara and others. And so, firstly, both waves of invaders descended on the Bulgarian territories by crossing water obstacles: the sea in the first case, and in the case of the Pechenegs—the Danube. A boundary *par excellence*, this river was thought both as a border of the Roman-Hellenic civilization, and of the Christian Empire, and also as the absolute *beginning* of the Bulgarian inclusion into the world history of Salvation, as has become clear from the text about Tsar Slav and Tsar Ispor who were situated namely near the estuary of the Danube. And secondly, both waves of invaders came from the North, the archetypal direction of *evil, chaos*, the 'unclean peoples of Gog and Magog' and the like. This all indicates that in this specific text, the invaders were modeled after the archetypal term *ispolini*, i.e. giants, or the first men who, according to their description in the Old Testament, had grown proud against God. Most probably, these were intentional rhetorical methods that sought, through the older clichés, to incorporate into a well-known scheme

the fall of the Bulgarian Tsardom at the *End of Times* and before Judgment Day, without necessarily taking into account historical accuracy.

It may be hypothetically assumed that in its initial appearance in the text, the word *ispolini* did not mark the pagan Rus' also ethnically, since by the time this apocalyptic work was created the latter had long converted to Christianity. In this connection it is interesting to note another fact regarding this same type of works, which has already been addressed here: the abundant use of *Vugri* and 'Ishmaelites' seen as invaders in the Christian (by default Bulgarian) Empire; they, however, were not marked as 'giants' or 'violators'.

3.3.4.2 Specific Features of the Bulgarian *Islamic* Case

The Quran (VII. 69, XI. 60, XLI. 12–15, LIV. 18–20, LXIX. 4–8) mentions the so-called people Aad that lived in Arabia immediately after Noah and the flood. They were described as very tall people who had failed to believe in the one and only God; which is why they were punished by Him. According to one version, they were all destroyed, while another claims that they were carried away by Allah far north.⁴⁰³

A similar tradition about the first giant people can also be found among the early Iranians: according to their legends, the first king on earth, Afridun, originated from the dynasty of giants and it was this king that had divided the earth into several parts. The eastern part went to the Chinese and the Turks, the southern, i.e. Iran, to Iraj, while the western that included the Eastern Roman Empire and the surrounding lands and was known as Al-Rum, was given to Salm.⁴⁰⁴ Naturally, this information was recorded much later, probably some time after the mid-6th century, which is also evident from the appearance of the Turks as an important element of the myth. Whether or not it contains a reflection of ancient Scythian notions, as Anatolii Khazanov believes,⁴⁰⁵ is not the object of our interest in this particular paragraph, however.

Although the description of Ibn Fadlan does not mention the Aad people, it is nonetheless hard to imagine that this Arab author from the first half of the 10th century was not aware of this story from the Quran.⁴⁰⁶ According to Ibn Fadlan, a tall and very big man appeared in the land of the Volga Bulgars; their ruler inquired about him among the people of the land of Wisu/Visu that was situated a three months' journey from the Bulgars. The people of Wisu/Visu told him that this giant was from the people of 'Yajuj and Majuj' that lived

403 See Piotrovskii 1991, 56–59; Kovalevskii 1956, 60; Kalinina 2005, 91.

404 Kalinina 2005, 92; Ibn Khordadbeh 1986, 60; Abureikhan Biruni 1975, 113.

405 Khazanov 1975, 99–100.

406 Kalinina 2005, 92.

even further north than Wisu/Visu, “beyond the sea”,⁴⁰⁷ i.e. the Arab author identified this colossus with the ‘unclean peoples’ Gog and Magog, well known to him from the Quran (also found in the Old Testament). They were believed to inhabit the extreme North—a motif that has been amply addressed in the present book. Recently, Kevin van Bladel has demonstrated that the Quran has further developed this story on the basis of the Syrian legend of Alexander the Great.⁴⁰⁸

It is no coincidence that, according to Ibn Fadlan, the land of Wisu/Visu is seen as a wild place, separated from the Bulgars by the sea and mountains (again the motif of the clear, unambiguous boundary of the water or mountain barrier!). In addition, there is a mention of the existence of a barrier (*sic*) in these same mountains, precisely according to the cliché of the *barrier* that was the work of Alexander the Great, raised at his command against the northern ‘unclean peoples’.⁴⁰⁹ The fact that this barrier would only be opened on Allah’s command, to let these ‘unclean peoples’ descend onto the world of civilization, is another important detail that suggests the contamination of the legend of Alexander the Great with the Islamic notions of the *End of the world*.⁴¹⁰ As has already been said, the figure of Alexander the Great appears in the Quran precisely in this connection: there, he is presented not only as a hero, but also as the demiurge ruler. He held a permanent place in the perceptions of the medieval Muslims in view of the disasters expected to befall the civilized people south of the mentioned barrier before the *End of Times*. As we have already noticed, in the Persian-Arabic medieval literature this barrier is situated both in the extreme North and in the farthest East,⁴¹¹ although the tradition of Ibn Al-Faqih, Ibn Fadlan and Al-Garnati, which is the one of actual interest here, firmly connects it with the extreme North.

Al-Garnati mentions the settlement of the mentioned giants in the Volga Bulgar and Bashkir territories,⁴¹² explicitly stating that he himself had seen many mounds/burials and bones of such people in the lands of the Bashkirs; he had heard the same thing about the land of the Volga Bulgars. The latter is an unmistakable reference to the Aad people from the Quran that had been settled in the extreme North by Allah. According to later ethnographic data from the lands of the Chuvash people, who today inhabit the territories of the

407 See the text in Ibn Fadlan 1992, 57; Kovalevskii 1956, 138–139.

408 Bladel 2008, 175–203.

409 Kalinina 2005, 92–93; Kovalevskii 1956, 138–139.

410 For more details, see Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010.

411 Kalinina 2005, 96–97; Van Donzel, Schmidt 2010, 53–54, 73–74, 90–99.

412 Puteshestvie Abu-Khamida al-Garnati 1971, 42–43, 60–61.

former Volga-Kama Bulgaria, the Volga giants, called *Ulypi*, could be seen as good and helpful creatures.⁴¹³

3.3.4.3 Specific Features of the *Scandinavian Case*

The interest in the northern giants is clearly seen also in texts that stem from the traditions of the Scandinavian peoples themselves. There, the giants are often associated with the peoples of Gog and Magog (the latter name also appears in forms such as “Magok” and “Magon”), which suggests a literary (Christian) original source, without this necessarily meaning that it was the only one. Possibly a number of other legends with local (autochthonous), i.e. pagan, prototypes have found their place as the primary basis of the Christian Scandinavian myths. This is especially valid for the travelers to the extreme North, some of whom perished in these travels filled with uncertainty and hardships. For example, some Scandinavian runic inscriptions mention the name of the “land of the giants,” Risaland, which was apparently visited by some of the characters mentioned in these glorifying inscriptions.⁴¹⁴ Whether these inscriptions were associated by the locals with notions of the afterlife, which, according to the Indo-Europeans, was usually associated with the northern direction and was marked by the black color, as Grigorii Bongard-Levin and Edvin Grantovskii believe,⁴¹⁵ or were reflections of different attitudes, remains beyond the scope of the present study.

There are, however, some sagas that mention these ‘unclean’ peoples (of) Gog and Magog, with the city of Kiev, the center of sorts of the Rus’ian lands, strangely enough named at least in one saga as having been ruled by Magog. This is the so-called *Ørvar—Odds saga/Arrow—Odd saga*.⁴¹⁶ The author of this saga was an Icelander who derived the story from Norway, with the dating wavering between 1265 and the late 13th or the early 14th century.⁴¹⁷ In the saga, the konung Kænmar is described as the ruler of Kiev: “... and one called Kænmar ruled over Kiev where the first settler had been Magog (*sic*) the son of Japhet, Noah’s son”.⁴¹⁸

Galina Glazyrina states that name used of the above sentence in the original, *Kænugarðr*, is, in fact, the Old Scandinavian designation for the city of Kiev, while “where” marks the omitted but implied word *Garðariki*, the Old

413 Kratkaiia chuvashkaia entsiklopediia 2001, 472.

414 Mel’nikova 2001, 78, 285.

415 See Bongard-Levin, Grantovskii 2001, 86.

416 Arrow—Odd Saga 1985, 117; Drevniaia Rus’ (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 258–266, esp. 264.

417 On the dating, see Drevniaia Rus’ (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 259.

418 I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Metodii Rozhdestvenskii for pointing out this saga to me, along with the information it contained.

Scandinavian name for Rus'.⁴¹⁹ This information is interpolated in one of the editions (A–B) of the saga.⁴²⁰

Another work (which is found in a single manuscript, *Hauksbók*, dated to the period between 1320 and 1334), known as *Landnámabók* or the Book of Settlements, contains the fullest description found in a Scandinavian source of the two 'thirds' of the then-known world, Asia and Europe. Although likely written between the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century, *Landnámabók* was probably based on Old Scandinavian sources from the period between the mid-12th to the mid-13th century at the latest.⁴²¹ It has been long noticed that, as far as the description of Asia is concerned, the author has drawn his information primarily from Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* and from *Imago Mundi* by Honorius Augustodunensis. In his descriptions of the North and East of Europe, however, the unknown Scandinavian writer based his account not only on well-known Christian authors, but also on popular sagas that were filled with stories of heroes and contained much more specific information regarding the contemporary political situation.⁴²² The interesting thing for our topic in this case is that this source also contains the same information regarding Magon (*sic*), mentioned earlier, i.e. that he was the first to rule over the lands of *Kænuþgarðr* or Kiev—and even all of Rus', as the mention of Kiev in the text is preceded by several other well-known cities and trade centers of the Rus': Murom, Rostov Velikii, Suzdal', Novgorod, Polotsk, etc.⁴²³

A slightly different idea of the relation between Magog and the lands of the North can be found in another work, rather concise, but again of the kind listing the lands and peoples of the known inhabited parts of the world at that time (the so-called triad of Asia, Africa and Europe). It is also primarily based on book IX of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, with the relevant additions made by the author concerning the North and East of Europe in particular. It again describes Magog, the son of Noah, as the ruler of the northernmost parts of the world, though this time it is not Rus' that is denoted as his 'domain', but the so-called Great *Svíþjóð*, or *Svithiod*, i.e. present-day Sweden.⁴²⁴

Another saga about the ancient Icelanders and known as *Yngvar's Saga* (and preserved in written form from the 13th century), reflects a different motif about giant creatures. It tells of the destruction of such a giant's home by Yngvar

419 Drevniaia Rus' (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 264 and n. 82 and 83.

420 Drevniaia Rus' (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 263–264.

421 Drevniaia Rus' (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 321.

422 Drevniaia Rus' (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 321–322.

423 Drevniaia Rus' (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 325.

424 Drevniaia Rus' (Khrestomatiia) 2009, 327: "The Great Svithiod, where Magok ruled".

and his companions, who also killed the giant himself.⁴²⁵ According to Tat'iana Kalinina, this story probably contains the encoded ancient Indo-European mythologeme of the giant's dissection into separate parts, to create the living world,⁴²⁶ and it is such archaic beliefs that have been reflected in this saga. Naturally, on a purely structural level, this story can also provide allusions to Hellenic mythology, namely Zeus' struggle with the giants, or in other words, the fight of the new gods of 'light' (Heaven) who opposed the deities of the old faith and the olden times (*cf.* the well-known *Gigantomachy*). Tat'iana Kalinina offers additional possibilities for interpretation, such as the titan Boreas, i.e. the northern wind, whom Hellenic mythology situated in the north, near the so-called Riphean Mountains (thought to be the actual Ural Mountains by some scholars), and perceived as the bringer of cold to the southern parts of the Northern Hemisphere. Or the accounts of the one-eyed giants, Arimaspi, who guarded the foothills of the northern mountains and who were known also thanks to the 'Father of History', Herodotus. Tat'iana Kalinina associates them with the Ossetian legends about the so-called Waejugs, also one-eyed giants, as well as with the "guards with giant bodies", who guarded the lands of the 'blessed' northern people. The latter are also mentioned in the Indian epics.⁴²⁷ Let us also recall the legends from German mythology (and the Scandinavian one in general) about the aforementioned land of the giants, Risaland, that was situated way up north, in the eternally frost-bound world known as *Útgardar* or *Utgard*.⁴²⁸

In conclusion to what has been said in this paragraph, I would like to note that some of the above examples obviously suggest the well-known opposition between the 'own' and the 'foreign', and between 'good' and 'evil' (as seen through the prism of the geographical directions, which in the Northern Hemisphere traditionally mark *evil* most often in the north and, in rare cases, in the west, with *good* most often being situated in the 'center' or in the south). With regard to Christian Bulgaria, and the text of the above-discussed *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* in particular, the pattern/matrix of the *beginning* and *end* is again noticeable: according to the Holy Scripture, in the beginning were the giants, and sometime in the end (i.e. the pre-eschatological end), similar creatures appear once more, seemingly to put an end to the Christian (in this case, Bulgarian) Empire, thus fulfilling the prophecy of St. John's *Book*

425 Glazyrina 2002, 89–90.

426 On this see, in particular, Levinton 1987/1, 228.

427 For further details, see Kalinina 2005, 100 and n. 46 and 47.

428 Simek 1984, 217, 327–328, 427; Kalinina 2005, 100; for a general overview of the cosmography of the extreme north in the period between the 12th and the 14th centuries, see Simek 1990.

of *Revelation* (Rev. 7), and also in the older legends about the so-called four kingdoms that were well known in Christianity and were a further development of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 2).

The unknown Christian Bulgarian author who worked at the end of the 11th century (or at the beginning of the next one) most likely used the 'giants' and 'violators' clichés to reflect the actual fall, first of the eastern part of the Bulgarian Tsardom (971) and then of the entire state (1018) under a foreign, Byzantine rule, which was perceived as a kind of *End of Times*. Most likely he was also well-acquainted with the unsuccessful uprisings of Petur Delian and Georgi Voitekh (1040/1041 and 1072), aimed at restoring that same Bulgarian Tsardom before the anticipated *End* in 1092. All this also implies the descriptions of the 'unclean peoples' according to the biblical archetype: as 'giants' and 'violators', who have already invaded the Kingdom and contributed to its ruin.

The case of the Muslim Volga Bulgars is quite different. Since both Ibn Fadlan and Al-Garnati visited Volga Bulgaria (921/922 and, respectively, the first half of the 12th century), in times when its inhabitants did not anticipate in any way the *End of the world's* approach, their accounts did not include such vivid descriptions of the giants as 'violators' in the Muslim Volga Bulgarian state. On the contrary, they even mentioned trade relations—albeit mediated ones—between the Volga Bulgars and these giants, described as people from 'Yajuj and Majuj'. Indirectly, it becomes clear that the Volga Bulgars had inherited the lands that in ancient times had been inhabited by the legendary giant Aad people. It seems, however, that the Aad had nothing to do with the apocalyptic people Yajuj and Majuj, who were thought to inhabit at that time the lands of the remotest north, i.e. too far away from the lands of the Bulgars along the Volga and Kama Rivers.

The Scandinavian *case* is quite puzzling, since at least in some sagas one of the main centers of Rus', the city of Kiev and its surrounding lands, is presented as the old domain of Magog, i.e. as the primary place of habitation of the 'people of God's punishment' before the *End of Times*. This is indeed a serious deviation from the *cases* of the giants that were inherent to both types of Bulgarians in the period between the 11th and the 12th centuries, who avoided associating their *own* lands with such creatures that went beyond the norm. It is therefore evident that, despite the existence of 'drifting motifs' such as that of the giants in the various written traditions of the People of the Book, each particular text contains greater or lesser 'editings' of the original version of the relevant legend, so as to adequately reflect the specific historical context and the actual geographic knowledge at the time.

And a few sentences to conclude everything that has been said in the last few paragraphs of this chapter. The Bulgarians, it seems, imposed also new 'salvational' coordinates to their 'chosen (but lost) tsardom' from the new center of which, Sredets, the same 'chosen (Bulgarian) people' and its 'last tsar' would re-emerge. Thus, the relationship between the (sacred) *space* and *power* (the latter realized in this case in the concept of the 'last tsar') often transcends the specifics of the *topoi* in the historical apocalyptic texts, since it almost always has as a reference the *meta-topography* of the Promised Land. Sometimes, however, there are also references to older perceptions from the pagan past, as well as to similar texts, which makes it possible, in the new eschatological context, to expand the above-mentioned relationship with one more element and give it the following form: *power*—(sacred) *space*—*Salvation*.

On the other hand, based on the analysis of such *topoi* from the Bulgarian historical apocalypticism like the 'well' and 'Vitosha Mountain', or on the basis of the interpretation of expressions like "[Isaiah], go west, from the highest parts of Rome" ("*idi [Isaiia] na zapad, ot nai-gornite strani na Rim*"), "I have come [Isaiah] from the left side of Rome" ("*doidokh [Isaiia] ot liavata strana na Rim*")⁴²⁹ and the like, one can confirm the well-known adage⁴³⁰ that the determining characteristic of a sacred space lies in its orientation and/or direction. Furthermore, the two main and well-known systems of the 'symbolic topology', according to the terminology of Moshe Barasch, who also speaks of 'a vertical and a horizontal axis',⁴³¹ namely: 1) the grouping of places in a hierarchal, vertical manner, in which the central distinction is between 'higher' and 'lower', and 2) the horizontal grouping, in which the left and right sides are the central principles of differentiation, can be verified in many cases (and sometimes, only in part) by the Bulgarian sacred and symbolic *topoi*, found in a number of texts from historical apocalypticism. And in the apocalyptic imagination, these symbolic systems are undoubtedly the fundamental compositional principles of the apocalyptic image *par excellence*, the Last Judgment.⁴³²

According to the apocalyptic scheme that was developed by the unknown Bulgarian scribes from the 11th–12th centuries, in particular, in Daniel's *Vision about the Kings, and about the Last Days, and the End of the World*,⁴³³ which is based on the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara, 'Tsar Michael' who bore only some of the traits of the Last King, would rule before the

429 See the text in Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 195—the original, 199—translated into modern Bulgarian; Petkov 2008, 195.

430 Barasch 2000, 318.

431 Barasch 2000, 305–326.

432 Barasch 2000, 320.

433 See Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 120, 130; Petkov 2008, 202–203.

attack of the 'unclean peoples'. The latter would assail the lands of the 'chosen people' in the times of Michael's heir and just before the 'Roman Emperor'. This Michael is not, however, the 'Roman Emperor'! At the same time, he is marked by several important references: 1) he would rule in Thessaloniki (*cf.* the often-encountered opposition in Bulgarian historical apocalypticism from the 11th–12th centuries along the axis Sredets—Thessaloniki) for 33 years (*cf.* the lifespan of Jesus Christ); 2) in his time, the signs of the impending *End* would already be clearly seen: the opening of mountains and the dying-out of fish in the rivers; 3) then would come "peace on earth" and "there will be great joy on earth that has never been nor ever will be again"; 4) "the lords shall be as kings, and the poor like rich men"; 5) the king will call a special council to "renew the churches of the saints" with images (*sic*) and to "renew the altars". These are all obvious allusions to the actions of the basileus Michael III and his mother, Theodora, in 843, during their final victory over the iconodules. Finally, this same Michael would die, and after him, "a new scepter shall come", when the "twelve tsars of the aspid doors would rise"—a clear allusion to the aforementioned 'shut-out unclean peoples'. It is the latter who would cause the great shocks in the world, before being defeated by the Heavenly Host. Then would come the time of the 'Roman Emperor' who would settle in Jerusalem for 12 years—in the times when the Son of Perdition, Antichrist, would appear. Under these circumstances, the (Last) Roman Emperor would go to Golgotha, to lay "his crown at the cross" and "to give the Christian tsardom over to God the Father". The anonymous author expands this scheme with the arrival of the immortal until then Enoch and Elijah, who would take part in the battles against Antichrist and would finally find their end at ... the Tree of the Cross; after three days they would be resurrected just as Jesus Christ himself was, crucified before them on this same True Cross.

This scheme can therefore be presented in a concise manner in the following way: Michael → a subsequent unnamed ruler (this was the time of the attack of 'Gog and Magog' who would in turn be destroyed by the archangelic forces and by St. Michael the Archangel in particular) → the 'Last Roman Emperor' → the time of Antichrist → the arrival of Enoch and Elijah on earth. In the scheme, the Last Roman Emperor is not called Michael, he is left without a name or personal traits,⁴³⁴ i.e. precisely in accordance with the archetypal text of Pseudo-Methodius' *Apocalypse*. Before that, however, this same text contains so many *topoi* from the Bulgarian lands (the Danube, Mraka, Glavinitsa, Strumitsa, Sredets, Velbuzhd, etc., placed next to the 'original' *topoi* of Jerusalem, Calabria, Sicily, Rome, Persia, etc.), so that the reader would be

434 Alexander 1978c, 1–15.

left with no doubt whatsoever as to where the last battles would actually unfold before the onset of the *End of the world* in the Promised Land. This is actually an easily recognizable sacral geography with corresponding signs and *loci/topoi* from the *meta*-Holy Land, which are thus projected onto specific *topoi* from within the Bulgarian borders (and tsardom). This way, the latter acquire symbolic resources from the Promised Land, in order for the Bulgarian land to be seen as divinely ‘chosen’, i.e. as the (new) Promised Land, and its people—as the ‘new chosen people’. In truth, this approach was widely used during the Middle Ages, as has been demonstrated with a number of examples also in this study. And the most important thing: the compiler of this text postpones the moment of the *End* and the Last Judgment, that is, the time of the Kingdom of God, because he ends his tale namely with the exaltation of Enoch and Elijah.

The *Interpretation* from the same cycle of Daniel’s prophecies is no exception in this respect—it also ends with the death and the resurrection of Enoch and Elijah in Jerusalem.⁴³⁵ The difference in this case is that, contrary to the *Vision*, where Antichrist is said to have been born “in Sikhousa—in Strumitsa” (*sic*), in the *Interpretation* his place of birth is just “Sikhousa”, i.e. the interpolation “Strumitsa” is not present in the Bulgarian text. The same postponement of the *End* can also be seen in the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*: there, the text ends with the Pecheneg violence.⁴³⁶ Therefore, for the anonymous Bulgarian monk-scribes writing before the end of the 12th century, it was much easier and above all acceptable to mark the spatial dimensions of the expected approaching *End*, but not to engage in its specific temporal dimensions. And all this—despite the existence of an Old Bulgarian translation of the *Commentary* of St. Hippolytus of Rome on Daniel’s *Interpretation*, which was dated no later than the 10th century.⁴³⁷ It explicitly mentions the “thousand years from Christ’s incarnation”, which “are nearing their end”; then we must “expect the Lord’s coming, at the mid-point of the seventh millennium”.⁴³⁸

435 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 126, 136–137; Petkov 2008, 206.

436 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 198, 202; Petkov 2008, 199.

437 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 183–185; see also Shivarov 2004, 569–570.

438 Tăpkova-Zaimova and Miltenova 1996, 187–188.

Conclusion

Such an attempt at a reading and interpretation, done in a comparative pan-European perspective, allows for the creation a much wider picture of the anticipation of the *End*, with its *common places*, differences and specificities by region (based on the ethno-cultural and verbal distinction, with *verbal* in this case referring to the so-called sacred languages of the Scripture). During these two and a half centuries, we see the emergence of the outlines of a phenomenon—that of the anticipation of the *End of the world*—which appears to be far more encompassing than thought at first glance. Placed not only in a Christian framework, but also in the framework of the other two monotheistic religions, the *Expectation* phenomenon becomes seemingly more visible in its finer details, as well as its strange and unexpected windings through the time period in question. This wide panorama also makes it possible to distinguish more clearly the Bulgarian *case* with regard to the so-called salvational expectation, as well as to identify its particular specificities against others in the cultural-and-historical and ‘mental’ fate of Europe between the mid-10th century and the late 12th century.

With regard to the Christian world, as well as that of the Jews during the period defined in the book’s title, it would be more correct to say that the fear of the *End* was not a daily sensation of the particular man (be it a common peasant or a citizen, or a representative of the knights’ *ordo*, the clergy, or the higher secular nobility), nor was the everyday life of the latter permeated solely by fear. In fact, this *fear* went hand in hand with the *hope* that the promised world of peace and absolute justice of God would come soon (according to some, that would be right here on earth, although most theologians and thinkers believed it would be only after the Second Coming and Judgment Day, i.e. only in Heaven). It is no coincidence that every scholar who has worked on the topic of the *End of Times* around the year 1000 in Western Europe claims that immediately thereafter (or after 1033), the cities of the West experienced an unprecedented growth, with high points such as the construction of cathedrals, the emergence of many new phenomena, and with an overall sense of relief that the *End* is postponed and that work can be done to further improve people’s lives here on earth, as well as to glorify God in even more magnificent churches and with even brighter hues. The peak of the latter phenomenon, as is well-known, can be traced in the so-called gothic cathedrals, the fervent development of which is seen already after the end of the 11th century and especially during the following 12th century. So it seems much more plausible to assume that these mixed feelings regarding the *End* were typical only for the

highly erudite clergy, as well as for some imperial courts, since the issues of the *End* mostly concerned the *Empire* and the Last Emperor, and not the ordinary man. The latter can be seen quite clearly if these expectations are placed in the context of two particularly influential traditions that occurred long before the mid-10th century: that of the Tiburtine Sibyl and especially the tradition of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara. From these, it becomes apparent that the expectations for the *End of the World* in 11th–12th centuries especially strongly affected the idea of the fate of the *Empire* and the imperial *beginning* and *end*. Therefore—and I would like to accentuate this once more—they were above all imperially directed, and not solely the result of St. John's *Revelation*, or of the tradition of apocalyptic exegesis, established by St. Augustine in Late Antiquity. Thus, in the 10th–12th centuries, the imperially-oriented apocalypticism was also based on these two other, no less influential traditions, without, of course, overlooking St. John the Theologian and some of the Fathers of the Church.

It is precisely this orientation towards the imperial principle that can explain why the 'backbone' of the work mainly consists of the imperial structures of Europe from the 10th–12th centuries (Francia and the Holy Roman Empire, as a legacy of Charlemagne's empire, and Byzantium, Danube Bulgaria and Khazaria). One of the 'gospel truths' regarding the anticipation of the *End of Times* is that it is also associated with the anticipation of the Messiah and, respectively, the Second Coming of Christ, and with it—the idea of the Last Emperor/King and the end of his empire/kingdom just before the final *End of the world*. From all the above-mentioned empires, only the Khazar one did not have Christianity as a state religion. But even in this case we can see the well-known *computus* regarding the *End of Times* and the anticipation of the Messiah, which was typical for certain well-educated representatives of the Jewish communities in different parts of Europe and the Middle East. In this regard, Khazaria was similar to some of the above-mentioned imperial Christian states. Unfortunately, the sources on Khazaria from the 9th–10th centuries, at least at this stage of research, are extremely scarce, which makes it difficult to draw any more general conclusions in this respect.

Salvation—Promised Land—chosen people—savior (as Jesus Christ, and with the relevant attributes of a deliverer from Antichrist—also as St. Michael the Archangel)—*Paradise*: all these aspects overlap in a number of cases in the topic at hand. This is why, in this sense, we must assume that their semantic fields are not independent of one another. Hence, the possibilities to consider the topographic placement of the Promised Land—according to the various Christian peoples, for instance—as well as that of Paradise. This is so because

Promised/Holy Land and *Paradise* are fundamental concepts of the idea of Salvation! The latter, as a final point and ultimate goal, implies the mutual study of said concepts and their involvement *a priori*. In this connection, realia such as the *four directions*, the *four paradise rivers*, *mountain*, *well*, *field*, etc., as well as the punishing '*unclean peoples*' (from the point of view of the direction they invade the Holy/Promised Land), and the *wall* raised against them are all of utmost importance for such an analysis-and-synthesis. Hence, the need to examine the various *case studies* from equally different parts of Europe, and not only in its Christian part.

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Directions and *locations*: they are actually tied to *chrono-loci/chrono-top(oi)*, with the movement in time and space by presumption thought of as horizontal (by 'chosen peoples', by invaders, or by pilgrims, towards holy places, etc.), but in some cases also as vertical (Hell = below, Paradise = above, and also Paradise = east, Hell = west). The study of *texts*, *deeds* and *phenomena* reveals an abundance of (followed) paradigms, heritages/traditions, which are simultaneously 'in' and 'between' reality and the imagined. Seen from such a viewpoint, it becomes clear how important are the 'coordinates' of both the invaders and the 'chosen peoples', as well as the places of the 'last battle' and those of the Last Judgment, etc. In any case, it was also necessary to see what manipulations the medieval people made to the archetypal *directions* and *places* known from the old archetypal texts. The 'Bulgarian' perspective in particular reveals, for example, that according to some passages in texts, the role of the Bulgarian *Promised Land* during the 11th–12th century was given to Land of Karvuna, and during the 13th century it was Mezina Land; others claimed it to be Sredets and its hinterland. Alongside them, however, was also Ovche Pole, as a special *topos*.

The power of this imaginativeness is enormous. With "Sredets", in its meaning as a 'center'/'middle'/'mountain'/'world axis', and similar imaginings at the verbal level, as well as through *namings*, the Bulgarians attempted to escape from the despondency and despair caused by the defeats of 1040/1041 and of 1072/1073, as well as from all the evil brought to the Bulgarian lands by the invasions of the Pechenegs and the Uzes after the 1030s. This also prompted the revival of some older motifs of the Magyar invasion from the late 9th and the following 10th century. Such a revival was also partly evoked by the invasions of these same Magyars in the northwestern parts of Bulgaria that had fallen under Byzantine rule after 1018.

For the Danube Bulgarians, Jerusalem remained the absolute center, the place of this world's *beginning* and of its future *end*, the absolute *omphalos*. Jerusalem is at the top of the hierarchy from notions of the archetypal City-Center/Core. It is precisely because of this mental scheme that alongside Jerusalem, but also as its local Bulgarian 'substitute', appears Sredets (with Vitosha Mountain next to the city, "the resting place of saints"), as a specific Bulgarian 'salvational' *topos*. Sredets is the emanation of the Bulgarian vision of this same City-Center/middle/core in the Bulgarian 'chosen kingdom' from the end of the 10th century, and most probably also to the end of the 12th century; at least, this is the case according to the Bulgarian texts with historical-apocalyptic content. Sredets replaced after 971 the actual metropolitan center of the 'chosen kingdom' of the Bulgarians, the capital city of Preslav, which fell under the rule of the basileus John Tzimiskes. Naturally, the Bulgarian unknown writers of this type of texts never forgot that in the 'holy hierarchy' of the *Center*, second to Jerusalem, with regard to its significance and salvational mission came Constantinople. After the fall of the latter in 1204 in the hands of the knights of the Fourth Crusade, the Bulgarians would develop a new vision of the place of their *Middle/Center*, seen through the prism of a 'salvational' capital city, resulting in the concept of *Tsarevgrad Turnov* ("Imperial City of Turnov" in Bulgarian) as the center of Orthodoxy.

The third chapter of this book shows, first and foremost, the topography of the *suffering-and-punishment* of the 'chosen Bulgarians', that came from the 'unclean people' or from 'Ishmaelites' and the like, emphasizing on what the places/directions of this punishment were, as well as on who applied it (beyond the so-called archetypal peoples). Secondly, the third chapter directs us towards the topography of the *salvation*. By presumption that is Calvary Hill, and it is no coincidence that it was where the 'Last King' went. But in the Bulgarian *case*, this topography can also be linked in some of the texts with Rome: it is obvious that not by accident St. Tsar Petur of Bulgaria found his 'salvation' namely in this capital city, according to the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle*.

This *Bulgarian* 'system of coordinates', at least according to the historical apocalyptic works of the 11th–12th century, places in a horizontal plane Sredets *vs* Thessaloniki, seemingly as a substitute to the older 'salvational pair', i.e. Pliska + Preslav *vs* Constantinople.

Apart from 'horizontal' coordinates of the sacral topography of the Bulgarian lands (Sredets, Pliska and Preslav, Land of Karvuna, etc.), the Bulgarian historical-apocalyptic texts also contain a 'vertical' projection of the Salvation: Vitosha Mountain, the well (near Sredets) and the like. In other words, for the anonymous monk scribes, the *Promised Land* of Sredets was a projection

of Paradise, just as Jerusalem had such dimensions. Hence, in this case, as in many others, speaking figuratively, we see an adherence to the rules of the Biblical matrix.

The concept of the 'invading Gog and Magog' provides another marker for the so-called horizontal sacral geography, by localizing the places (=kingdoms) where these *unclean peoples* invade, as well as the directions of the strike against them. So the 'horizontal' sacred topography could be thought and analyzed—through the views about the *End of the World*—as a sum of *places* and *directions* (*back* and *forth*, *left* to *right*), which is '4'. The 'vertical' sacred topography can be analyzed in a similar way, again as a sum of *places* and *directions* (*below* and *above*), which would be '3'. From such an angle, it becomes easier to position each *new* 'Promised Land' in accordance with the biblical archetype, as well as the direction of the attacks of the 'unclean peoples (of) Gog and Magog' against the '*new* chosen peoples'.

Monks in the Bulgarian lands dealt with the tensions around the *End* in the usual way for any Christian: by using biblical archetypes and explanatory 'keys' (for signs and omens, for miracles, for natural disasters (hunger, locusts, floods, etc.), for failed uprisings, and so on). But the representatives of the other two monotheistic religions also used the Holy Book (the Torah and the Quran, respectively) for similar purposes. Thus the conclusion here is, quite expectedly, that for all three monotheistic religions everything begins with the *Word* and the *Revelation*.

Based on the analysis in the second and third chapter of this book, it can be said that with regard to the spatial dimension, the salvational *projections* point towards the conclusion that they can be both *horizontal* and *vertical*. In this respect, we see a reactivation of some ancient matrices, whose roots are lost in the mists of time. Their projection according to the well-known model '3 + 4' is quite visible in some Bulgarian historical-apocalyptic texts from the period before the fall of Constantinople in the hands of the Latins (13.04.1204). As has already been demonstrated, these texts place at the center of the intersection of the vertical and the horizontal coordinates the city of Sredets in particular. This city, therefore, is the imaginary center of the *new* Bulgarian Promised Land, of the *new* 'chosen people' of the Bulgarians, where the Salvation will be realized, since this is also the place where the earthly projection of Heavenly Jerusalem, or Paradise, is. The *well* and especially the *mountain* (Vitosha) are precisely this vertical dimension of Paradise. This *well* and this *Vitosha* seemingly pierce the *center/middle/core* of the 'chosen kingdom' of the Bulgarians, Sredets. This is why Sredets and its surroundings are *Axis mundi par excellence*: there, vertically situated is the *mountain* Vitosha—moving in an 'upward' direction, towards the heavens (as is every mountain, by presumption), with

the *well*, also situated near the same city and the same mountain, and moving in a 'downward' direction (again by presumption, as does every well). Thus, we have important coordinates also of the vertical sacral topography of the Bulgarians as the 'chosen people'.

But the *beginning* and the *end* of the Bulgarian Tsardom are not projected just vertically and/or horizontally. They have also other dimensions: they are given through a 'title' (*khagan, tsar*), as well as through a 'name' (*Peter* and *Michael*). This is yet another addition to the coding of the 'choseness' in the Bulgarian context.

In the course of the analysis of phenomena and processes, we observed a vast array of paradigms, archetypes, *topoi*, etc., which encourages us not to ignore the actual knowledge of the pre-modern man, and even less his imagination. This entails that it is necessary to look for the layers and the mutual strange interweaving between real *things* and imaginary ones with the idea that this dichotomy should not be overexposed, but be considered as something inherent in the thinking-and-feeling of the medieval people. Such primordial optics can prevent us from completely denying certain texts from the era (as being false or unfit for studying and reconstructing the historical past, or in the very least, as being manipulative)—an opinion that is widely held by advocates of the so-called positivist method.

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The next 'spike' in the eschatological expectation of the *End of Times* is associated with 1492. It can be seen both in the Orthodox milieu (with the greatest number of testimonies seemingly stemming from Russia, since after the fall of Constantinople in May 1453 it remained the only unconquered state that continued the civilizational legacy of Byzantium, as well as the former Bulgarian Tsardom), as well as in Western Europe, i.e. in the two main parts of Christianity. At that time, Western Europe was 'on the offence' against the 'forces of the Crescent' (mainly represented by the Ottoman Turks), especially after the failure of the so-called Long Crusade of King Wladyslaw III of Varna (Warnencyk) from 1444, as well as against the Mongols and Tatars in the Black Sea Basin. During the 1470s, the Genoese lost their cities and dominions along the Black Sea's northern coast of the sea and along the present-day Crimean Peninsula namely to the same Ottomans and the Mongols.

Some scholars have long been alluding, at the very least, that the great persecution of the Jews in Spain was not coincidentally related to the approaching year 1492 (its peak actually occurred in this very year), as well as the persistent

search for a way to the so-called New World (the Indies) by the courts of Genoa and Spain, that had tied their fates to Cristobal Colombo/Christopher Columbus. It was also hardly a coincidence that the Spaniards were in a hurry to complete their anti-Islamic (anti-Moorish) *reconquista* of the Pyrenees precisely in the decades immediately preceding 1492. It is therefore obvious that Christian Europe was highly agitated by the end of the seventh millennium of this world, linked namely to the year 1492. This is probably the reason behind all this rush, as well as the anxious scrutinization of the 'signs' in the sky and in those here on Earth.

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Illustrations



ILLUSTRATION 1 *Descent into Hell (Resurrection)*, mosaic in the Nea Moni Monastery, Greece, 11th century. From: Vachkova, V., and Shabarkova-Petrova, M., *Misteriata na bulgarskite stenopisi. Da dokosnesh Boga*. Sofia, 2014, p. 326, no. 9
PHOTO: V. VACHKOVA



ILLUSTRATION 2 *The Descent into Hell (Resurrection)*, mosaic in the Cathedral of San Marco, Venice, Italy, 12th–13th century. From: Vachkova, V., and Shabarkova-Petrova, M., *Misteriata na bulgarskite stenopisi*. Da dokosnesh Boga. Sofia, 2014, p. 327, no. 13
 PHOTO: V. VACHKOVA



ILLUSTRATION 3 *The Descent into Hell*, fresco in Boiana Church, Bulgaria, 1259. From: Vachkova, V., and Shabarkova-Petrova, M., *Misteriiata na bulgarskite stenopisi. Da dokosnesh Boga*. Sofia, 2014, p. 340, no. 30
PHOTO: V. VACHKOVA



ILLUSTRATION 4 Map III. 1.1, Madrid, Bibl. Nacional, Vitr., 14.3, f. 117 v. From: L. S. Chekin, *Kartografiia khristianskogo srednevekov'ia VIII–XIII vv.* Moscow, 1999 (with kind permission of L. Chekin)

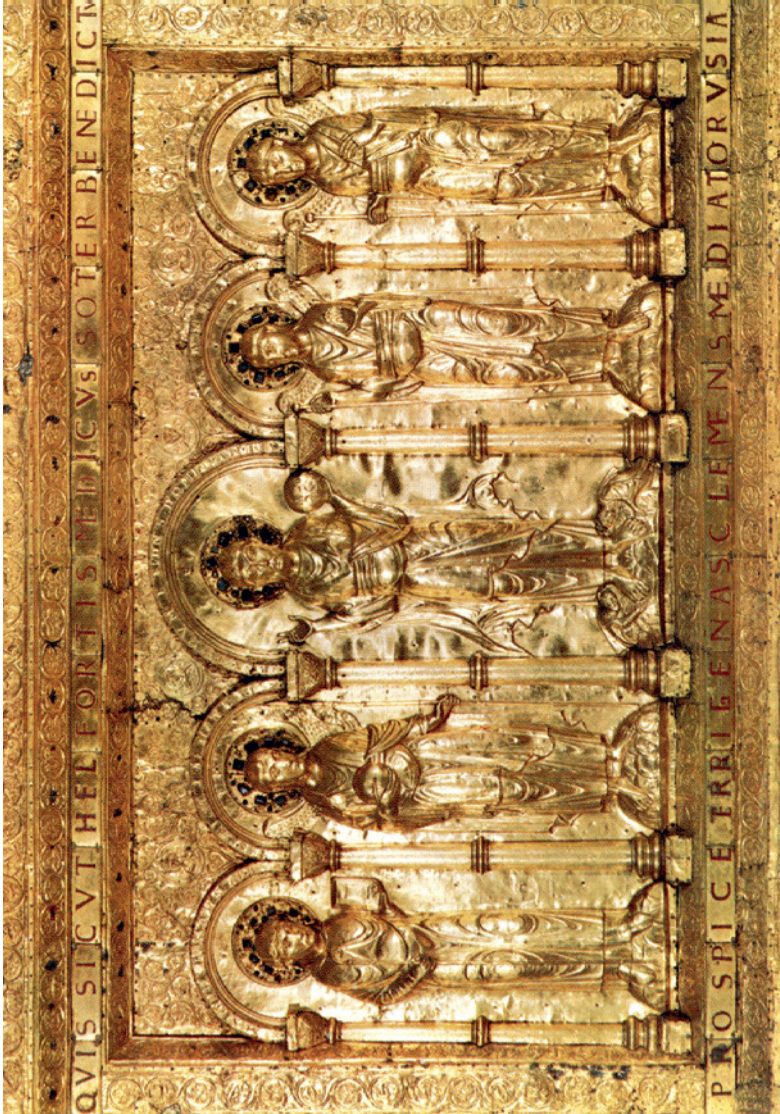


ILLUSTRATION 6 A golden antependium depicting Christ over the revering Emperor Henry II and Empress Cunigunde, between the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and St. Benedict, Mainz or Fulda, ca. 1019. From: J. Beckwith, *Early Medieval Art*. Repr. 1996: 'Thames and Hudson', p. 144, ill. 133
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